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1899

MEMOIRS

OF

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

MEMOIRS

OF

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH,

POET-LAUREATE, D. C. L.

17

BY

CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH, D.D.

CANON OF WESTMINSTER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

EDITED BY HENRY REED.

VOL. II.

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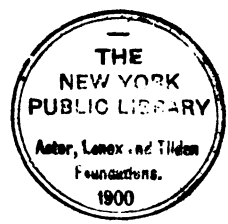

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MEMOIRS

OF

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

CHAPTER XXXII.

REMOVAL TO RYDAL.

In the spring of 1811, Mr. Wordsworth removed his family from Allan Bank, in consequence of the desire of the proprietor to occupy it with his own household, and he took up a temporary abode at the Parsonage, which is separate from the western boundary of the churchyard at Grasmere by the Keswick road. This sojourn was saddened by affliction. Two of his children, Catharine and Thomas, as before mentioned, died at the Parsonage, after a very short illness, the one on June 4th, 1812, the other on the 1st December of the same year.

Under other circumstances, it would have been very difficult for him to withdraw from the Vale of Grasmere, which had been the first object of his choice in the beautiful region of the lakes, and had been his home for twelve years. But now its beauties were mingled with sad

reminiscences. 'The house,' he says, in a letter[1] to Lord Lonsdale, 'which I have for some time occupied, is the Parsonage of Grasmere. It stands close by the churchyard' (where his two children were buried), 'and I have found it absolutely necessary that we should quit a place which, by recalling to our minds at every moment the losses we have sustained in the course of the last year, would grievously retard our progress towards that tranquillity which it is our duty to aim at.' This was written in the first freshness of sorrow; and it so happened, that a very desirable residence was then about to become vacant in the neighbourhood, about two miles distant from Grasmere; and thus a favourable occasion offered itself for a removal. This was RYDAL MOUNT. Thither Mr. Wordsworth migrated with his wife, his sister, sister-in-law, and three children, in the spring of 1813, and there he resided till his death in 1850. This place has been already described in a previous chapter.

In that delineation, I have described its appearance by *day*, but have not touched on its *nocturnal* aspect. In the lines prefixed to the later editions of his poems, the author apostrophizes himself, and says,

> 'If thou indeed derive thy light from heaven,
> Then, to the measure of that heavenborn light,
> Shine, POET, in thy place, and be content.'

These and the following lines were suggested by the view of the starry heavens, as seen at Rydal Mount. On these verses the Poet said, 'They were written some time after we had become resident at Rydal Mount; and I will take occasion from them to observe upon the beauty of that situation, as being backed and flanked by lofty fells,

[1] Dated Jan. 8, 1813.

which bring the heavenly bodies to touch, as it were, the earth upon the mountain-tops, while the prospect in front lies open to a length of level valley, the extended lake, and a terminating ridge of low hills; so that it gives an opportunity to the inhabitants of the place of noticing the stars in both the positions here alluded to, namely, on the tops of the mountains, and as winter-lamps at a distance among the leafless trees.'[1]

The change of residence to Rydal was marked by another personal incident of importance in Mr. Wordsworth's life. This was his appointment to the distributorship of stamps in the county of Westmoreland: he was nominated to that situation on the 27th March, 1813. Whether his literary merits might have then been thought sufficient of themselves to entitle him to public recognition and reward, is not easy to say; certain it is he was indebted to that truly noble-minded person, the late Lord Lonsdale, for representing his claims, and for supporting them by his influence; and it was undoubtedly, in a great measure, through his lordship's good offices, that Mr. Wordsworth was placed in a situation which raised his income to an easy competency, and freed him from private cares, without oppressing him with public ones: he was released from anxiety, without forfeiting leisure and liberty; he was also left in his own picturesque county. Hence in the year following, he was able to complete and publish 'The Excursion,' in a prefatory sonnet to which he thus speaks:

> 'Now, by thy care befriended, I appear
> Before thee, LONSDALE; and this work present,
> A token (may it prove a monument!)
> Of high respect and gratitude sincere.'

[1] MSS. I. F.

It were much to be desired, that such situations as these were more numerous than they are, and that those which exist were more carefully conferred. They are better than pensions, as rewards for literary men; for they do not encourage the notion, that literary service of the highest order *can* be compensated by *money*, and they do not exhibit those who hold them as wearing the livery of a political party, or as stipendiaries of the state. It is no objection to say that some of them are almost *sinecures*. Mr. Wordsworth's office was by no means a sinecure, as his coadjutor and successor can attest. But, grant that some of these offices are sinecures: what then? A *sinecure*, which would have relieved Dante or Tasso from the cravings of penury, would have had a function attached to it of the noblest kind. Such sinecures (if so they must be called) are *more useful* to the public than some laborious offices, the duties of which are discharged with bustling and restless activity.

Some time after Mr. Wordsworth received this appointment, another offer was made him of a much more lucrative office, — the collectorship of the town of Whitehaven. This, however, he declined. He had now enough to gratify his moderate desires; and no worldly allurements could remove him from the beautiful retirement of Rydal to a large town.

It would be unpardonable to neglect another circumstance connected with his appointment, which tended much to relieve Mr. Wordsworth's mind from care, and to leave him free to follow his literary pursuits. This was his connection with a young man who then came to him as a clerk, Mr. John Carter. Many incidents of a domestic kind occurred in Mr. Wordsworth's life, which contributed, in their due order and degree, to aid in the removal of difficulties, and in the supply of means and

appliances, in his poetical career. For example, his antipathy to writing was compensated by the readiness of those around him to commit his words to paper. He held a pen with reluctance and impatience, but he wielded many pens in the hands of others.* And in his official coadjutor, he not only found a person well qualified to administer his affairs, but also a vigilant corrector of the press, a sound scholar, and a judicious critic. And justice would not be done, and Mr. Wordsworth's feelings would be wronged, if his own name went down to posterity unaccompanied by that of one who served him faithfully, zealously, and efficiently for thirty-seven years, and, by thus serving him as he did, conferred a benefit on the world.

* [The following characteristic allusion is made to this subject by his friend Charles Lamb: — 'Tell Mrs. W. her postscripts are always agreeable. They are so legible too. Your manual-graphy is terrible, dark as Lycophron. * * I should not wonder if the constant making out of such paragraphs is the cause of that weakness in Mrs. W.'s eyes, as she is tenderly pleased to express it. Dorothy, I hear, has mounted spectacles; so you have deoculated two of your dearest relations in life. Well, God bless you, and continue to give you power to write with a finger of power upon our hearts what you fail to impress, in corresponding lucidness, upon our outward eye-sight!' — 'Final Memorials of Charles Lamb,' Chap. VI. — H. R.]

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OPINIONS ON CERTAIN QUESTIONS OF POLICY, DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN. 1811–1821.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Wordsworth's life was passsed mainly in retirement, yet, as will be obvious to every reader of his works, and, as has been remarked already in these pages, he was a vigilant observer of public affairs. He did not sequester himself from the world, in order to forget its concerns, but to study them more profoundly. His idea of a 'Recluse' was that of one who was also a cosmopolite and a philanthropist. In loving nature, he loved man and society, as the noblest works of nature; and, therefore, in the exordium of the 'Recluse,' he says,

> 'On Man, on Nature, and on human Life,
> Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
> Fair trains of imagery before me rise.'[1]

He endeavoured to wean the public mind from material and transitory things to spiritual and lasting ones, to extricate it from the entanglement of circumstantial details, and to place it on the solid foundation of essential principles. His political opinions are, therefore, interwoven with his poetical imagery; and both in poetry and politics he evinced the same resolute determination not to be swayed by the current of popular opinions, but to en-

[1] Vol. vi. p. 5.

deavour to bring popular opinions to the test of sound reason, and the standard of enlightened experience. I remember one day, when I was walking with him in a village of Middlesex, on a bright day, that he pointed to the sun, then in its meridian splendour. 'The sun,' said he, 'was personified by the ancients as a charioteer driving four fiery steeds over the vault of heaven; and this solar charioteer was called Phœbus, or Apollo, and was regarded as the god of poetry, of prophecy, and of medicine. Phœbus combined all these characters. And every poet has a similar mission on earth: he also must be a Phœbus in his own way; he must diffuse health and light; he must prophesy to his generation; he must teach the present age by counselling with the future; he must plead for posterity; and he must imitate Phœbus in guiding and governing all his faculties, fiery steeds though they be, with the most exact precision, lest, instead of being a Phœbus, he prove a Phaeton, and set the world on fire, and be hurled from his car; he must rein-in his fancy, and temper his imagination, with the control and direction of sound reason, and drive on in the right track with a steady hand.'

Mr. Wordsworth being thus commissioned, as a poet, to execute, as it were, a prophetical, and almost a sacerdotal office, for the benefit of society,—and his mission being extended to great public interests, and being concerned about great public questions, it is necessary, for the illustration of his works, to trace the course of his opinions on subjects of domestic and foreign policy.

This may best be done in his own words; and I shall, therefore, here set down some intimations of his sentiments, as communicated to his friends; confining myself at present (with one exception) to communications from the year 1811 to 1821.

Writing from Grasmere to his friend, Archdeacon Wrangham, he says:

'*Grasmere, March* 27.

'My dear Wrangham,

'Your last letter, which I have left so long unanswered, found me in a distressed state of mind, with one of my children lying nearly, as I thought, at the point of death. This put me off answering your letter. . . .

'You return to the R. Catholic Question. I am decidedly of opinion that no further concessions should be made. The R. Catholic Emancipation is a mere pretext of ambitious and discontented men. Are you prepared for the next step — a R. Catholic Established Church? I confess I dread the thought.

'As to the Bible Society, my view of the subject is as follows: — 1st. Distributing Bibles is a good thing. 2dly. More Bibles will be distributed in consequence of the existence of the Bible Society; therefore, so far as that goes, the existence of the Bible Society is good. But, 3dly, as to the *indirect* benefits expected from it, as producing a golden age of unanimity among Christians, all that I think fume and emptiness; nay, far worse. So deeply am I persuaded that discord and artifice, and pride and ambition, would be fostered by such an approximation and unnatural alliance of sects, that I am inclined to think the evil thus produced would more than outweigh the good done by dispersing the Bibles. I think the last fifty or sixty pages of my brother's pamphlet[1] merit the serious consideration of all persons of the Established Church

[1] Reasons for declining to become a subscriber to the British and Foreign Bible Society, by Christopher Wordsworth, D. D., Dean of Bocking. Lond. 1810. See also his letter to Lord Teignmouth in vindication of the above Letter. Lond. 1810.

who have connected themselves with the sectaries for this purpose. . . . . .

'Entreating your pardon for my long delay in answering your letter, let me conclude with assuring you that I remain, with great truth, your affectionate friend,

'W. WORDSWORTH.'

The following was addressed to the same friend by Mr. Wordsworth, soon after his removal to Rydal Mount in 1813:

'*Rydal Mount, near Ambleside, Aug.* 28, 1813.

'My dear Wrangham,

'Your letter arrived when I was on the point of going from home on business. I took it with me, intending to answer it upon the road, but I had not courage to undertake the office on account of the inquiries it contains concerning my family. I will be brief on this melancholy subject. In the course of the last year I have lost two sweet children, a girl and a boy, at the ages of four and six and a half. These innocents were the delight of our hearts, and beloved by everybody that knew them. They were cut off in a few hours — one by the measles, and the other by convulsions; dying, one half a year after the other. I quit this sorrowful subject, secure of your sympathy as a father and as my friend.

. . . . . .

'My employment I find salutary to me, and of consequence in a pecuniary point of view, as my literary employments bring me no remuneration, nor promise any. As to what you say about the ministry, I very much prefer the course of their policy to that of the Opposition: especially on two points most near my heart: resistance of Buonaparte by force of arms, and their adherence to

the principles of the British Constitution in withholding political power from the Roman Catholics. My most determined hostility shall always be directed against those statesmen who, like Whitbread, Grenville, and others, would crouch to a sanguinary tyrant; and I cannot act with those who see no danger to the Constitution in introducing papists into Parliament. There are other points of policy in which I deem the Opposition grievously mistaken, and therefore I am at present, and long have been, by principle, a supporter of ministers, as far as my little influence extends. With affectionate wishes for your welfare and that of your family, and with best regards to Mrs. Wrangham, I am, my dear friend,

'Faithfully yours,

'Wm. Wordsworth.'

The following is of a more playful character:

'*Rydal Mount, near Kendal, April* 26, 1814.

'My dear Wrangham,

'I trouble you with this in behalf of a very deserving young clergyman of the name of Jameson, who is just gone from this neighbourhood to a curacy at Sherbourne in the neighbourhood of Ferry Bridge. He has a mother and a younger brother dependent upon his exertions, and it is his wish to take pupils in order to increase his income, which, as he is a curate, you know, cannot but be small. He is an excellent young man, a good scholar, and likely to become much better, for he is extremely industrious. Among his talents I must mention that for drawing, in which he is a proficient. . . . . Now my wish is that, if it fall in your way, you would vouchsafe him your patronage. . . . . .

'Of course, you cannot speak for him directly till you

have seen him; but, might he be permitted to refer to you, you could have no objection to say, that you were as yet ignorant of his merits as to your own knowledge, but that "your *esteemed* friend Mr. Wordsworth, that *popular* poet, stamp-collector for Westmoreland, &c., had recommended him strenuously to you as in all things deserving."

'A portion of a long poem[1] from me will see the light ere long; I hope it will give you pleasure. It is serious, and has been written with great labour. . . . . .

'I mean to make a tour in Scotland with Mrs. W. and her sister, Miss Hutchinson. I congratulate you on the overthrow of the execrable despot, and the complete triumph of the *war faction*, of which noble body I have the honour to be as active a member as my abilities and industry would allow. Best remembrances to yourself and Mrs. Wrangham,

'And believe me affectionately yours,

'W. WORDSWORTH.'

In the year 1818* Mr. Wordsworth published 'Two Addresses to the Freeholders of Westmoreland,' from which the following paragraphs are derived.

[1] The Excursion, published 1814.

* [Wordsworth's interest in political affairs is thus incidentally alluded to by Mr. R. M. Milnes in his 'Life and Letters of Keats,' in connection with a visit made by the younger poet to Rydal Mount, in June, 1818: — 'His (Keats's) disappointment at missing Wordsworth was very great, and he hardly concealed his vexation when he found that he owed the privation to the interest which the elder poet was taking in the general election.' P. 107. It may be added that it appears from Keats's letters that, as early as 1818, he was in the habit of making comparisons between the genius of Milton and that of Wordsworth. — H. R.]

'Looking up to the Government with respectful attachment, we all acknowledge that power must be controlled and checked, or it will be abused; hence the desirableness of a vigorous Opposition in the House of Commons; and hence a wish, grounded upon a conviction of general expediency, that the opposition to ministry, whose head and chief seat of action are in Parliament, should be efficaciously diffused through all parts of the country. On this principle the two grand divisions of party, under our free government, are founded. Conscience, regulated by expediency, is the basis; honour, binding men to each other in spite of temptation, is the corner-stone, and the superstructure is friendship, protecting kindness, gratitude, and all the moral sentiments by which self-interest is liberalized. Such is party, looked at on the favourable side. Cogent *moral* inducements, therefore, exist for the prevalence of two powerful bodies in the practice of the State, spreading their influence and interests throughout the country; and, on *political* considerations it is desirable that the strength of each should bear such proportion to that of the other, that, while Ministry are able to carry into effect measures not palpably injurious, the vigilance of Opposition may turn to account, being backed by power at all times sufficient to awe, but never (were that possible), except when supported by manifest reason, to intimidate.

'Such apportioning of the strength of the two parties *has* existed; such a degree of power the Opposition formerly possessed: and if they have lost that salutary power, if they are dwindled and divided, they must ascribe it to their own errors. They are weak because they have been unwise: they are brought low, because when they had solid and high ground to stand upon, they took a flight into the air. To have hoped too ardently of human nature, as they did at the commencement of the French

Revolution, was no dishonour to them as men; but *politicians* cannot be allowed to plead temptations to fancy, or impulses of feeling, in exculpation of mistakes in judgment. Grant, however, to the enthusiasm of philanthropy as much indulgence as it may call for, it is still extraordinary that, in the minds of English statesmen and legislators, the naked absurdity of the means did not raise a doubt as to the attainableness of the end. Mr. Fox, captivated by the vanities of a system founded upon abstract rights, chanted his expectations in the House of Parliament; and too many of his friends partook of the illusion. The most sagacious politician of his age broke out in an opposite strain. Time has verified his predictions; the books remain in which his principles of foreknowledge were laid down; but, as the author became afterwards a pensioner of state, thousands, in this country of free opinions, persist in asserting that his divination was guesswork, and that conscience had no part in urging him to speak. That warning voice proved vain; the party from whom he separated, proceeded, confiding in splendid oratorical talents and ardent feelings rashly wedded to novel expectations, when common sense, uninquisitive experience, and a modest reliance on old habits of judgment, when either these, or a philosophic penetration, were the only qualities that could have served them.

'How many private individuals, at that period, were kept in a rational course by circumstances, supplying restraints which their own understandings would not have furnished! Through what fatality it happens, that bodies of men are so slow to profit, in a similar way, by circumstances affecting their prosperity, the Opposition seem never to have inquired. They could not avoid observing, that the holders of property throughout the country, being mostly panic-stricken by the proceedings in France,

turned instinctively against the admirers of the new system; and, as security for property is the very basis of civil society, how was it possible but that reflecting men, who perceive this truth, should mistrust those representatives of the people, who could not have acted less prudently, had they been utterly unconscious of it! But they had committed themselves and did not retract; either from unabating devotion to their cause, or from false honour, and that self-injuring consistency, the favourite sister of obstinacy, which the mixed conscience of mankind is but too apt to produce. Meanwhile the tactics of Parliament must continue in exercise on some system or other; their adversaries were to be annoyed at any rate; and so intent were they upon this, that, in proportion as the entrenchments of Ministry strengthened, the assaults of Opposition became more careless and desperate.

'While the war of words and opinions was going forward' in this country, Europe was deluged with blood. They in whose hands power was vested among us, in course of time lost ground in public opinion, through the failure of their efforts. Parties were broken and recomposed; but men who are brought together less by principle than by events, cannot cordially co-operate, or remain long united. The opponents of the war, in this middle stage and desponding state of it, were not popular; and afterwards, when the success of the enemy made the majority of the nation feel that peace dictated by him could not be lasting, and they were bent on persevering in the struggle, the party of Opposition persisted in a course of action which, as their countenance of the doctrine of the rights of man had brought their understandings into disrepute, cast suspicion on the soundness of their patriotic affections. Their passions made them blind to the differences between a state of peace and war,

(above all, such a war!) as prescribing rules for their own conduct. They were ignorant, or never bore in mind, that a species of hostility which, had there been no foreign enemy to resist, might have proved useful and honourable, became equally pernicious and disgraceful when a formidable foe threatened us with destruction.

'I appeal to impartial recollection, whether, during the course of the late awful struggle, and in the latter stages of it especially, the antagonists of ministers, in the two houses of parliament, did not, for the most part, conduct themselves more like allies to a military despot, who was attempting to enslave the world, and to whom their own country was an object of paramount hatred, than like honest Englishmen, who had breathed the air of liberty from their cradles. If any state of things could supply them with motives for acting in that manner, they must abide by the consequences. They must reconcile themselves as well as they can to dislike and disesteem, the unavoidable results of behaviour so unnatural. Peace has, indeed, come; but do they who deprecated the continuance of the war, and clamoured for its close on any terms, rejoice heartily in a triumph by which their prophecies were belied? Did they lend their voices to swell the hymn of transport that resounded through our land, when the arch-enemy was overthrown? Are they pleased that inheritances have been restored, and that legitimate governments have been re-established, on the Continent? And do they grieve when those re-established governments act unworthily of the favour which Providence has shown them? Do not too many, rather, secretly congratulate themselves on every proof of imbecility or misconduct there exhibited; and endeavour that attention shall be exclusively fixed on those melancholy facts, as if they were the only fruits of a triumph, to which we Britons

owe that we are a fearless, undishonoured, and rapidly improving people, and the nations of the Continent owe their very existence as self-governed communities?

'The party of Opposition, or what remains of it, has much to repent of; many humiliating reflections must pass through the minds of those who compose it, and they must learn the hard lesson to be thankful for them as a discipline indispensable to their amendment. Thus only can they furnish a sufficient nucleus for the formation of a new body; nor can there be any hope of such body being adequate to its appropriate service, and of its possessing that portion of good opinion which shall entitle it to the respect of its antagonists, unless it live and act, for a length of time, under a distinct conception of the kind and degree of hostility to the executive government which is fairly warrantable. The party must cease indiscriminately to court the discontented, and to league itself with men who are athirst for innovation, to a point which leaves it doubtful, whether an Opposition that is willing to co-operate with such agitators loves as it ought to do, and becomingly venerates, the happy and glorious constitution, in church and state, which we have inherited from our ancestors.'[1]

'The weakness and degradation of the Opposition, deplored by all true friends of the commonweal, was sufficiently accounted for, without even adverting to the fact, that, when the disasters of the war had induced the country to forgive, and in some degree to forget, the alarming attachment of that party to French theories; and power, heightened by the popularity of hope and expectation, was thrown into their hands — they disgusted even bigoted adherents, by the rapacious use they made of that power;

[1] Addresses, p. 9–16.

stooping to so many offensive compromises, and committing so many faults in every department, that a government of talents,* if such be the fruits of talent, was proved to be the most mischievous sort of government which England had ever been troubled with. So that, whether in or out of place, an evil genius seemed to attend them!

'How could all this happen? For the fundamental reason, that neither the religion, the laws, the morals, the manners, nor the literature of the country, especially as contrasted with those of France, were prized by the leaders of the party as they deserved."[1]

'Remember what England might have been with an administration countenancing French doctrines at the dawn of the French Revolution, and suffering them, as it advanced, to be sown with every wind that came across the channel! Think what was the state of Europe before the French emperor, the apparent, and in too many respects the real, idol of Opposition, was overthrown!

'Numbers, I am aware, do not cease vehemently to maintain that the late war was neither just nor necessary; that the ostensible and real causes of it were widely different; that it was not begun, and persisted in, for the purpose of withstanding foreign aggression, and in defence of social order; but from unprincipled ambition in the powers of Europe, eager to seize that opportunity of agumenting their territories at the expense of distracted and enfeebled France. Events, ever to be lamented, do, I grant, give too much colour to those affirmations. But

[1] Addresses, p. 20.

* [The special allusion here will not be overlooked by the reader, recalling the well known name given to Lord Grenville's Coalition Ministry in 1806–7. — H. R.]

this was a war upon a large scale, wherein many belligerents took part; and no one who distinctly remembers the state of Europe at its commencement, will be inclined any more to question that the alleged motives had a solid foundation, because then, or afterwards, others might mix with them, than he would doubt that the maintenance of Christianity, and the reduction of the power of the Infidels, were the principal motives of the Crusades, because roving adventurers, joining in those expeditions, turned them to their own profit. Traders and hypocrites may make part of a caravan bound to Mecca; but it does not follow that a religious observance is not the prime object of the pilgrimage. The political fanaticism (it deserves no milder name) that pervaded the manifesto issued by the Duke of Brunswick, on his entry into France, proves that he, and the power whose organ he was, were swayed on their march by an ambition very different from that of territorial aggrandizement; at least, if such ambition existed, it is plain that feelings of another kind blinded them to the means of gratifying it. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge, the passion soon manifested itself, and in a quarter where it was least excusable. The seizure of Valenciennes, in the name of the Emperor of Germany, was an act of such glaring rapacity, and gave the lie so unfeelingly to all that had been professed, that the then ministers of Great Britain, doubtless, opposed the intention with a strong remonstrance. But the dictates of magnanimity (which in such cases is but another word for high and sage policy) would have been — "this unjust act must either be abandoned, or Great Britain shall retire from a contest which, if such principles are to govern, or interfere with, the conduct of it, cannot but be calamitous." A threat to this purpose was either not given, or not acted upon. *Hinc illæ clades!* From that moment the alliance

of the French loyalists with the coalesced powers seemed to have no ground of rational patriotism to stand upon. Their professed helpers became their worst enemies; and numbers among them not only began to wish for the defeat of their false friends, but joined themselves to their fellow-countrymen, of all parties, who were labouring to effect it. But the military successes of the French, arising mainly from this want of principle in the confederate powers, in course of time placed the policy and justice of the war upon a new footing. However men might differ about the necessity or reasonableness of resorting to arms in the first instance, things were brought to such a state that, among the disinterested and dispassionate, there could be but one opinion (even if nothing higher than security was aimed at), on the demand for the utmost strength of the nation being put forth in the prosecution of the war, till it should assume a more hopeful aspect. And now it was that ministers made ample amends for past subserviency to selfish coadjutors, and proved themselves worthy of being entrusted with the fate of Europe. While the Opposition were taking counsel from their fears, and recommending despair — while they continued to magnify without scruple the strength of the enemy, and to expose, misrepresent, and therefore increase the weaknesses of their country, his majesty's ministers were not daunted, though often discouraged: they struggled up against adversity with fortitude, and persevered heroically; throwing themselves upon the honour and wisdom of the country, and trusting for the issue to the decrees of a just Providence: and for this determination everlasting gratitude will attend them!'[1]

In connection with these expressions of opinion, a

[1] Addresses, p. 23–26.

communication to his friend Southey is here introduced, though not written till many years afterward; but it seemed to find a proper place here, as showing the consistency of Mr. Wordsworth's sentiments on this subject. The personal references in this letter will be read with interest:

To Robert Southey, Esq.

'——, 1827.

'My dear Sir,

'Edith thanked you, in my name, for your valuable present of the "Peninsular War."[1] I have read it with great delight: it is beautifully written, and a most interesting story. I did not notice a single sentiment or opinion that I could have wished away but one — where you support the notion that, if the Duke of Wellington had not lived and commanded, Buonaparte must have continued the master of Europe. I do not object to this from any dislike I have to the Duke, but from a conviction — I trust a philosophic one — that Providence would not allow the upsetting of so diabolical a system as Buonaparte's to depend upon the existence of any individual. Justly was it observed by Lord Wellesley, that Buonaparte was of an order of minds that created for themselves great reverses. He might have gone further, and said that it is of the nature of tyranny to work to its own destruction.[2]

[1] The first volume published 1823, the others in 1827 and 1832. Mr. Wordsworth's copy has the following written on the title-page in Mr. Southey's hand: 'William Wordsworth, from the author, Dec. 14, 1822: "Præcipuum munus Annalium reor, ne virtutes sileantur, utque pravis dictis factisque ex posteritate et infamiâ metus sit." —*Tacitus.*'

[2] As has been said by Demosthenes.

'The sentence of yours which occasioned these loose remarks is, as I said, the only one I objected to, while I met with a thousand things to admire. Your sympathy with the great cause is everywhere energetically and feelingly expressed. What fine fellows were Alvarez and Albuquerque; and how deeply interesting the siege of Gerona!

'I have not yet mentioned dear Sir George Beaumont.[1] His illness was not long; and he was prepared by habitually thinking on his latter end. But it is impossible not to grieve for ourselves, for his loss cannot be supplied. Let dear Edith stay as long as you can; and when she must go, pray come for her, and stay a few days with us. Farewell.

'Ever most affectionately yours,

'W. W——.'

The following is expressive of his opinion concerning Mr. Southey as a writer:

To G. Huntly Gordon, Esq.

'*Rydal Mount, May* 14, 1829.

'Mr. Southey means to present me (as usual) his "Colloquies," &c. There is, perhaps, not a page of them that he did not read me in MS.; and several of the Dialogues are upon subjects which we have often discussed. I am greatly interested with much of the book; but upon its effect as a whole I can yet form no opinion, as it was read to me as it happened to be written. I need scarcely say that Mr. Southey ranks very highly, in my opinion, as a prose writer. His style is eminently clear, lively, and

[1] Who died Feb. 7, 1827.

unencumbered, and his information unbounded; and there is a moral ardour about his compositions which nobly distinguishes them from the trading and factious authorship of the present day. He may not improbably be our companion in Wales next year. At the end of this month he goes, with his family, to the Isle of Man for sea-air; and said, if I would accompany him, and put off the Welsh tour for another year, he would join our party. Notwithstanding the inducement, I could not bring myself to consent; but as things now are, I shall remind him of the hope he held out.

'Believe me, very faithfully, yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.

'There is no probability of my being in town this season. I have a horror of smoking; and nothing but a necessity for health's sake could reconcile me to it in William.'

In the year 1821 (October 7), an old friend of Mr. Wordsworth thus writes to him: 'They tell me you have changed your opinions upon many subjects respecting which we used to think alike; but I am persuaded we shall neither of us change those great principles which ought to guide us in our conduct, and lead us to do all the good we can to others. And I am much mistaken if we should not find many things to talk about without disturbing ourselves with political or party disputes.'

To this communication Mr. Wordsworth's reply was as follows:

'*Rydal Mount, Dec.* 4, 1821.

'My dear L——,

'Your letter ought to have been much earlier acknowl-

edged, and would have been so, had I not been sure you would ascribe my silence to its true cause, viz. procrastination, and not to indifference to your kind attention. There was another feeling which both urged and indisposed me to write to you, — I mean the allusion which, in so friendly a manner, you make to a supposed change in my political opinions. To the scribblers in pamphlets and periodical publications who have heaped so much obloquy upon myself and my friends Coleridge and Southey, I have not condescended to reply, nor ever shall; but to you, my candid and enlightened friend, I will say a few words on this subject, which, if we have the good fortune to meet again, as I hope we may, will probably be further dwelt upon.

'I should think that I had lived to little purpose if my notions on the subject of government had undergone no modification: my youth must, in that case, have been without enthusiasm, and my manhood endued with small capability of profiting by reflection. If I were addressing those who have dwelt so liberally with the words renegade, apostate, &c., I should retort the charge, upon them, and say, *you* have been deluded by *places* and *persons*, while I have stuck to *principles*. *I* abandoned France and her rulers when *they* abandoned the struggle for liberty, gave themselves up to tyranny, and endeavoured to enslave the world. I disapproved of the war against France at its commencement, thinking, which was perhaps, an error, that it might have been avoided; but after Buonaparte had violated the independence of Switzerland, my heart turned against him, and against the nation that could submit to be the instrument of such an outrage. Here it was that I parted, in feeling, from the Whigs, and to a certain degree united with their adversaries, who were free from the delusion (such I must

ever regard it), of Mr. Fox and his party, that a safe and honourable peace was practicable with the French nation, and that an ambitious conqueror like Buonaparte could be softened down into a commercial rival.

'In a determination, therefore, to aim at the overthrow of that inordinate ambition by war, I sided with the ministry, not from general approbation of their conduct, but as men who thought right on this essential point. How deeply this question interested me will be plain to any one who will take the trouble of reading my political sonnets, and the tract occasioned by the "Convention of Cintra," in which are sufficient evidences of my dissatisfaction with the mode of conducting the war, and a prophetic display of the course which it would take if carried on upon the principles of justice, and with due respect for the feelings of the oppressed nations.

'This is enough for foreign politics, as influencing my attachments.

'There are three great domestic questions, viz., the liberty of the press, parliamentary reform, and Roman Catholic concession, which, if I briefly advert to, no more need be said at present.

'A free discussion of public measures through the press, I deem the *only* safeguard of liberty: without it I have neither confidence in kings, parliaments, judges, or divines: they have all in their turn betrayed their country. But the press, so potent for good, is scarcely less so for evil; and unfortunately they who are misled and abused by its means are the persons whom it can least benefit. It is the fatal characteristic of their disease to reject all remedies coming from the quarter that has caused or aggravated the malady. I am *therefore* for vigorous restrictions; but there is scarcely any abuse that

I would not endure rather than sacrifice, or even endanger, this freedom.

'When I was young, (giving myself credit for qualities which I did not possess, and measuring mankind by that standard), I thought it derogatory to human nature to set up property in preference to person as a title for legislative power. That notion has vanished. I now perceive many advantages in our present complex system of representation which formerly eluded my observation; this has tempered my ardour for reform: but if any plan could be contrived for throwing the representation fairly into the hands of the property of the country, and not leaving it so much in the hands of the large proprietors as it now is, it should have my best support; though even in that event there would be a sacrifice of personal rights, independent of property, that are now frequently exercised for the benefit of the community.

'Be not startled when I say that I am averse to further concessions to the Roman Catholics. My reasons are, that such concessions will not produce harmony among the Roman Catholics themselves; that they among them who are most clamorous for the measure, care little about it but as a step, first, to the overthrow of the Protestant establishment in Ireland, as introductory to a separation of the two countries — their ultimate aim; that I cannot consent to take the character of a religion from the declaration of powerful professors of it disclaiming doctrines imputed to that religion; that, taking its character from what it *actually teaches to the great mass*, I believe the Roman Catholic religion to be unchanged in its doctrines and unsoftened in its spirit, - how can it be otherwise unless the doctrine of Infallibility be given up? that such concessions would set all other dissenters in motion — an issue which has never fairly been met by the friends

to concession: and deeming the Church Establishment not only a fundamental part of our constitution, but one of the greatest upholders and propagators of civilization in our own country, and, lastly, the most effectual and main support of religious Toleration, I cannot but look with jealousy upon measures which must reduce her relative influence, unless they be accompanied with arrangements more adequate than any yet adopted for the preservation and increase of that influence, to keep pace with the other powers in the community.

'I do not apologize for this long letter, the substance of which you may report to any one worthy of a reply, who, in your hearing, may animadvert upon my political conduct. I ought to have added, perhaps, a word on *local politics*, but I have not space; but what I should have said, may in a great measure be deduced from the above.

'I am, my dear L——,

'Yours, &c. &c.,

'W. W.'

CHAPTER XXXIV.

TOUR IN SCOTLAND.

On the 18th July, 1814, Wordsworth, accompanied by his wife, and his wife's sister, Miss Sarah Hutchinson, left Rydal Mount, on a tour in Scotland. The only poems which appear to have been produced by this tour are the following:

The Brownie's Cell, suggested by a beautiful ruin on one of the islands of Loch Lomond.[1]

Cora Linn,[2] in sight of Wallace's Tower.

Effusion on the banks of the Bran, near Dunkeld.[3]

Sonnet to Mr. Gillies:

'From the dark chambers of dejection freed.'[4]

The travellers dined one day with Mr. Gillies at Edinburgh. 'Mr. G. is nephew of Lord Gillies, the Scotch Judge, and also of the historian of Greece, and cousin to Miss Margaret Gillies, who painted so many portraits with success in our house.'[5]

Yarrow Visited.[6]

This visit was made in company with Dr. Anderson, the editor of British Poets, and the Ettrick Shepherd. The party had refreshment at the cottage of the Ettrick

[1] Vol. iii. p. 40. [2] Vol. iii. p. 44. [3] Vol. iii. p. 46.
[4] Vol. ii. p. 280. [5] MSS. I. F. [6] Vol. iii. p 50.

Shepherd's father, he being a shepherd, a fine old man more than eighty years of age.

The following records of this tour, in connection with these poems, are from Mr. Wordsworth's dictation.

SECOND TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1814.

'In this tour my wife and her sister Sarah were my companions. The account of the *Brownie's Cell*, and the Brownies, was given me by a man we met with on the banks of Loch Lomond, a little above Tarbet, and in front of a huge mass of rock by the side of which, we were told, preachings were often held in the open air. The place is quite a solitude, and the surrounding scenery very striking. How much is it to be regretted that, instead of writing such poems as the "Holy Fair," and others in which the religious services of his country are treated with so much levity, and too often with indecency, Burns had not employed his genius in describing religion under the serious and affecting aspects it must so frequently take!'

Cora Linn.—'I had seen this celebrated water-fall twice before. But the feelings to which it had given birth were not expressed till they recurred in presence of the object on this occasion.'

Effusion, near Dunkeld.—'I am not aware that this condemnatory effusion was ever seen by the owner of the place. He might be disposed to pay little attention to it; but, were it to prove otherwise, I should be glad, for the whole exhibition is distressingly puerile.'

Yarrow Visited.—'As mentioned in my verses on the death of the Ettrick Shepherd, my first visit to Yarrow was in his company. We had lodged the night before at Traquhair, where Hogg had joined us, and also Dr. An-

derson, the editor of the British Poets, who was on a visit at the manse. Dr. A. walked with us till we came in view of the vale of Yarrow, and being advanced in life he then turned back. The old man was passionately fond of poetry, though with not much of a discriminating judgment, as the volumes he edited sufficiently show; but I was much pleased to meet with him and to acknowledge my obligation to his collection, which had been my brother John's companion in more than one voyage to India, and which he gave me before his departure from Grasmere never to return. Through these volumes I became first familiar with Chaucer; and so little money had I then to spare for books, that in all probability, but for this same work, I should have known little of Drayton, Daniel, and other distinguished poets of the Elizabethan age and their immediate successors, till a much later period of my life. I am glad to record this, not for any importance of its own, but as a tribute of gratitude to this simple-hearted old man, who I never again had the pleasure of meeting. I seldom read or think of this poem without regretting that my dear sister was not of the party, as she would have had so much delight in recalling the time when, travelling together in Scotland, we declined going in search of this celebrated stream, not altogether, I will frankly confess, for the reasons assigned in the poem on the occasion.'

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE EXCURSION.

In the summer of the year 1814, appeared 'The Excursion,' being a portion of 'The Recluse.'

The following details, derived from the author's conversation, will put the reader in possession of all requisite knowledge concerning the local and personal references in this poem, and respecting the occasions on which its several parts were composed. In perusing these illustrative notices he will bear in mind, that they were not *committed to writing* by the author, but were dictated by him orally to the friend who requested information on the points to which they advert, and were specially designed for the gratification of that friend, and of other intimate associates, especially his daughter, Mrs. Quillinan.— Hence, they are for the most part narrative, and scarcely any reference is made in them to the high aims with which 'The Excursion' was composed, and which, it is taken for granted, are already familiar to the reader. These notices[1] were dictated twenty-seven years after the poem was published; and in the 74th year of the author's age.

The Excursion. — 'Towards the close of the 1st book stand the lines that were first written, beginning "Nine tedious years," and ending "last human tenant of these ruined walls." These were composed in 1795, at Race-

[1] From MSS. I. F.

down; and for several passages describing the employment and demeanour of Margaret during her affliction, I am indebted to observations made in Dorsetshire, and afterwards at Alfoxden, in Somersetshire, where I resided in 1797 and 1798. The lines towards the conclusion of the 4th book, "Despondency corrected," beginning "For the man who in this spirit," to the words "intellectual soul," were in order of time composed the next, either at Racedown or Alfoxden, I do not remember which. The rest of the poem was written in the vale of Grasmere, chiefly during our residence at Allan Bank. The long poem on my own education was, together with many minor poems, composed while we lived at the cottage at Town-End. Perhaps my purpose of giving an additional interest to these my poems, in the eyes of my nearest and dearest friends, may be promoted by saying a few words upon the character of the "Wanderer," the "Solitary," and the "Pastor," and some other of the persons introduced. And first of the principal one, the "Wanderer."

'My lamented friend Southey (for this is written a month after his decease)[1] used to say that had he been a Papist, the course of life which in all probability would have been his, was the one for which he was most fitted and most to his mind, that of a Benedictine Monk, in a convent, furnished, as many once were, and some still are, with an inexhaustible library. *Books*, as appears from many passages in his writings, and was evident to those who had opportunities of observing his daily life, were, in fact, *his passion;* and *wandering* I can with truth affirm, was *mine;* but this propensity in me was happily counteracted by inability from want of fortune to fulfil my wishes.

[1] Which took place in March, 1843.

'But had I been born in a class which would ha deprived me of what is called a liberal education, it is n unlikely that, being strong in body, I should have tak to a way of life such as that in which my "Wanderer passed the greater part of his days. At all events, I a here called upon freely to acknowledge that the charact I have represented in his person is chiefly an idea what I fancied my own character might have become i his circumstances.

'Nevertheless much of what he says and does had a external existence, that fell under my own youthful an subsequent observation.

'An individual named Patrick, by birth and education Scotchman, followed this humble occupation for man years, and afterwards settled in the town of Kendal. H married a kinswoman of my wife's, and her sister Sara spent part of her childhood under this good man's eye. My own imaginations I was happy to find clothed in reality, and fresh ones suggested, by what she reported of this man's tenderness of heart, his strong and pure imagination, and his solid attainments in literature, chiefly religious, whether in prose or verse. At Hawkshead also, while I was a school-boy, there occasionally resided a packman (the name then generally given to this calling), with whom I had frequent conversations upon what had befallen him, and what he had observed during his wandering life, and, as was natural, we took much to each other; and upon the subject of his occupation in general, as *then* followed, and its favourableness to an intimate knowledge of human concerns, not merely among the humbler classes of society, I need say nothing here in addition to what is to be found in "The Excursion," and a note attached to it. [1]

[1] Vol. vi. p. 283.

'Now for the *Solitary*. Of him I have much less to say. Not long after we took up our abode at Grasmere, came to reside there, for what motive I either never knew or have forgotten, a Scotchman, a little past the middle of life, who had for many years been chaplain to a Highland regiment. He was in no respect, as far as I know, an interesting character, though in his appearance there was a good deal that attracted attention, as if he had been shattered in fortune, and not happy in mind. Of his former position I availed myself to connect with the "Wanderer," also a Scotchman, a character suitable to my purpose, the elements of which I drew from several persons with whom I had been connected, and who fell under my observation during frequent residences in London at the beginning of the French Revolution. The chief of these was, one may now say, a Mr. Fawcett, a preacher at a dissenting meeting-house at the Old Jewry. It happened to me several times to be one of his congregation through my connection with Mr. Nicholson of Cateaton Street, who, at a time when I had not many acquaintances in London, used often to invite us to dine with him on Sundays; and I took that opportunity (Mr. N. being a dissenter) of going to hear Fawcett, who was an able and eloquent man. He published a poem on war, which had a good deal of merit, and made me think more about him than I should otherwise have done. But his Christianity was probably never very deeply rooted; and, like many others in those times of like showy talents, he had not strength of character to withstand the effects of the French Revolution, and of the wild and lax opinions which had done so much towards producing it, and far more in carrying it forward in its extremes. Poor Fawcett, I have been told, became pretty much such a person as I have described, and early disappeared from the stage,

having fallen into habits of intemperance, which I h heard (though I will not answer for the fact) hastened death. Of him I need say no more. There were m like him at that time, which the world will never be w out, but which were more numerous then, for reasons obvious to be dwelt upon.

'*The Pastor.*—To what is said of the "Pastor" in poem, I have little to add but what may be deem superfluous. It has ever appeared to me highly favou ble to the beneficial influence of the Church of Engla upon all gradations and classes of society, that the patr age of its benefices is in numerous instances attached the estates of noble families of ancient gentry; a accordingly I am gratified by the opportunity afford me in "The Excursion," to portray the character of country clergyman of more than ordinary talents, bo and bred in the upper ranks of society so as to partake their refinements, and at the same time brought by h pastoral office and his love of rural life into intima connection with the peasantry of his native district.

'To illustrate the relation which in my mind th "Pastor" bore to the "Wanderer," and the resemblance between them, or rather the points of community in thei nature, I likened one to an oak, and the other to a syca more; and having here referred to this comparison, need only add, I had no one individual in my mind wishing rather to embody this idea than to break in upo the simplicity of it by traits of individual character, or o any peculiarity of opinion.

'And now for a few words upon the scene where these interviews and conversations are supposed to occur.

'The scene of the first book of the poem is, I must own, laid in a tract of country not sufficiently near to that which soon comes into view in the second book, to agree

with the fact. All that relates to Margaret, and the ruined cottage, &c., was taken from observations made in the south-west of England, and certainly it would require more than seven-leagued boots to stretch in one morning from a common in Somersetshire, or Dorsetshire, to the heights of Furness Fells, and the deep valleys they embosom. For this dealing with space, I need make, I trust, no apology.

'In the poem, I suppose that the Pedlar and I ascended from a plain country up the vale of Langdale, and struck off a good way above the chapel to the western side of the vale; we ascended the hill, and thence looked down upon the circular recess in which lies Blea Tarn, chosen by the "Solitary" for his retreat. When we quit his cottage, after passing a low ridge, we descend into another vale, that of Little Langdale, towards the head of which stands embowered, or partly shaded by yews and other trees, something between a cottage and a mansion, or gentleman's house, such as they once were in this country. This I convert into the parsonage, and at the same time, and as by the waving of a magic wand, I turn the comparatively confined vale of Langdale, its tarn, and the rude chapel which once adorned the valley, into the stately and comparatively spacious vale of Grasmere and its ancient parish church; and upon the side of Loughrigg Fell, at the foot of the lake, and looking down upon it and the whole vale and its accompanying mountains, the "Pastor" is supposed by me to stand, when at sunset he addresses his companions in words which I hope my readers may remember,[1] or I should not have taken the trouble of giving so much in detail the materials on which my mind actually worked.

[1] Excursion; book the last, near the conclusion.

'Now for a few particulars of *fact*, respecting the p sons whose stories are told or characters described by different speakers. To Margaret I have already allud I will add here that the lines beginning,

"She was a woman of a steady mind,"

and,

"Live on earth a life of happiness,"

faithfully delineate, as far as they go, the character p sessed in common by many women whom it has been n happiness to know in humble life; and that several of t most touching things which she is represented as sayi and doing are taken from actual observation of the di tresses and trials under which different persons we suffering, some of them strangers to me, and others dail under my notice.

'I was born too late to have a distinct remembrance c the origin of the American war; but the state in which represent Robert's mind to be, I had frequent opportuni ties of observing at the commencement of our ruptur with France in 1793; opportunities of which I availe myself in the story of the "Female Vagrant," as told i the poem on "Guilt and Sorrow." The account given b the "Solitary," towards the close of the second book, i all that belongs to the character of the old man, was taken from a Grasmere pauper, who was boarded in the last house quitting the vale on the road to Ambleside; the character of his hostess, and all that befel the poor man upon the mountain, belongs to Paterdale. The woman I knew well; her name was Ruth Jackson, and she was exactly such a person as I describe. The ruins of the old chapel, among which the old man was found lying, may yet be traced, and stood upon the ridge that divides Paterdale from Boardale and Martindale, having been placed

there for the convenience of both districts. The glorious appearance disclosed above and among the mountains, was described partly from what my friend Mr. Luff, who then lived in Paterdale, witnessed upon this melancholy occasion, and partly from what Mrs. Wordsworth and I had seen, in company with Sir G. and Lady Beaumont, above Hartshope Hall, in our way from Paterdale to Ambleside.

'And now for a few words upon the church, its monuments, and of the deceased who are spoken of as lying in the surrounding churchyard.' But first for the one picture given by the "Wanderer" of the living. In this nothing is introduced but what was taken from nature, and real life. The cottage was called Hackett, and stands, as described, on the southern extremity of the ridge which separates the two Langdales. The pair who inhabited it were called Jonathan and Betty Yewdale. Once when our children were ill, of whooping-cough I think, we took them for change of air to this cottage, and were in the habit of going there to drink tea upon fine summer afternoons; so that we became intimately acquainted with the characters, habits, and lives of these good, and let me say, in the main, wise people. The matron had, in her early youth, been a servant in a house at Hawkshead, where several boys boarded, while I was a school-boy there. I did not remember her as having served in that capacity; but we had many little anecdotes to tell to each other of remarkable boys, incidents, and adventures, which had made a noise in their day in that small town. These two persons afterwards settled at Rydal, where they both died.*

* [One of the posthumous volumes of 'The Doctor' gives other particulars respecting this pair, and a story told by Betty Yewdale

'*Church and Churchyard.* — The church already noticed, is that of Grasmere. The interior of it has been improved lately — made warmer by underdrawing the roof, and raising the floor; but the rude and antique majesty of its former appearance has been impaired by painting the rafters; and the oak benches, with a simple rail at the back dividing them from each other, have given way to seats that have more the appearance of pews. It is remarkable that, excepting only the pew belonging to Rydal Hall, that to Rydal Mount, the one to the parsonage, and, I believe, another, the men and women still continue, as used to be the custom in Wales, to sit on separate sides of the church from each other. Is this practice as old as the Reformation? and when and how did it originate? In the Jewish synagogues, and in Lady Huntingdon's chapels, the sexes are divided in the same way. In the adjoining churchyard greater changes have taken place; it is now not a little crowded with tombstones; and near the school-house, which stands in the churchyard, is an ugly structure, built to receive the hearse, which is recently come into use. It would not be worth while to allude to this building, or the hearse-vehicle it contains, but that the latter has been the means of in-

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herself, of which the editor, the Rev. John Wood Warter, Southey's son-in-law, gives the following account in a note to 'Interchapter XXIV:'

'Miss Sarah Hutchinson, Mrs. Wordsworth's sister, and Mrs. Warter took down the story from the old woman's lips, and Southey laid it by for "The Doctor, etc." She then lived in a cottage at Rydal, where I afterwards saw her. Of the old man it was told me — (for I did not see him) — "He is a perfect picture — like those we meet with in the better copies of Saints in our old Prayer Books."' 'The Doctor, etc.' Vol. VII. p. 94. — H. R.]

troducing a change much to be lamented in the mode of conducting funerals among the mountains. Now, the coffin is lodged in the hearse at the door of the house of the deceased, and the corpse is so conveyed to the churchyard gate. All the solemnity which formerly attended its progress, as described in this poem, is put an end to. So much do I regret this, that I beg to be excused for giving utterance here to a wish that, should it befal me to die at Rydal Mount, my own body may be carried to Grasmere Church after the manner in which, till lately, that of every one was borne to the place of sepulchre, namely, on the shoulders of neighbours; no house being passed without some words of a funeral psalm being sung at the time by the attendants bearing it. When I put into the mouth of the "Wanderer" "Many precious sights and customs of our rural ancestry are gone, or stealing from us," "this, I hope, will last for ever," and what follows, little did I foresee that the observance and mode of proceeding which had often affected me so much would so soon be superseded.

'Having said much of the injury done to this churchyard, let me add, that one is at liberty to look forward to a time when, by the growth of the yew-trees thriving there, a solemnity will be spread over the place that will in some degree make amends for the old simple character which has already been so much encroached upon, and will be still more every year. I will here set down, by way of memorial, that my friend Sir G. Beaumont, having long ago purchased the beautiful piece of water called Loughrigg Tarn, on the banks of which he intended to build, I told him that a person in Kendal who was attached to the place wished to purchase it. Sir George, finding the possession of no use to him, consented to part with it, and placed the purchase-money, 20*l.* at my disposal, for

any local use which I thought proper. Accordingly, I resolved to plant yew-trees in the churchyard; and had four pretty strong large oak enclosures made, in each of which was planted under my own eye, and principally, if not entirely, by my own hand, two young trees, with the intention of leaving the one that throve best to stand. Many years after, Mr. Barber, who will long be remembered in Grasmere, Mr. Greenwood (the chief landed proprietor), and myself, had four other enclosures made in the churchyard at our own expense, in each of which was planted a tree taken from its neighbour, and they all stand thriving admirably, the fences having been removed as no longer necessary. May the trees be taken care of hereafter, when we are all gone; and some of them will perhaps, at some far distant time, rival the majesty of the yew at Lorton, and those which I have described as growing at Borrowdale, where they are still to be seen in grand assemblage.

'And now for the persons that are selected as lying in the churchyard. But first for the individual whose grave is prepared to receive him.

'His story is here truly related. He was a schoolfellow of mine for some years. He came to us when he was at least seventeen years of age, very tall, robust, and full grown. This prevented him from falling into the amusements and games of the school; consequently, he gave more time to books. He was not remarkably bright or quick, but, by industry, he made a progress more than respectable. His parents not being wealthy enough to send him to college when he left Hawkshead, he became a schoolmaster, with a view to preparing himself for holy orders. About this time he fell in love, as related in the poem, and everything followed as there described, except that I do not know exactly when and where he died.

The number of youths that came to Hawkshead school from the families of the humble yeomanry, to be educated to a certain degree of scholarship, as a preparation for the church, was considerable; and the fortunes of those persons in after life various of course, and of some not a little remarkable.

'The miner, next described as having found his treasure after twice ten years of labour, lived in Paterdale, and the story is true to the letter. It seems to me, however, rather remarkable, that the strength of mind which had supported him through this long unrewarded labour, did not enable him to bear its successful issue. Several times in the course of my life I have heard of sudden influxes of great wealth being followed by derangement; and, in one instance, the shock of good fortune was so great as to produce absolute idiotcy. But these all happened where there had been little or no previous effort to acquire the riches, and therefore such a consequence might the more naturally be expected, than in the case of the solitary miner. In reviewing his story, one cannot but regret that such perseverance was not sustained by a worthier object. Archimedes leaped out of his bath and ran about the streets, proclaiming his discovery in a transport of joy; but we are not told that he lost either his life or his senses in consequence.

'The next character, to whom the priest is led by contrast with the resoluteness displayed by the foregoing, is taken from a person born and bred in Grasmere, by name Dawson, and whose talents, dispositions, and way of life, were such as are here delineated. I did not know him, but all was fresh in memory when we settled at Grasmere in the beginning of the century. From this point the conversation leads to the mention of two individuals, who by their several fortunes were, at different times, driven to

take refuge at the small and obscure town of Hawkshead, on the skirt of these mountains. Their stories I had from the dear old dame with whom, as a school-boy, and afterwards, I lodged for the space of nearly ten years. The elder, the Jacobite, was named Drummond, and was of a high family in Scotland; the Hanoverian Whig bore the name of Vandeput,[1] and might, perhaps, be the descendant of some Dutchman who had come over in the train of King William. At all events, his zeal was such, that he ruined himself by a contest for the representation of London or Westminster, undertaken to support his party, and retired to this corner of the world, selected as it had been by Drummond for that obscurity which, since visiting the Lakes became fashionable, it has no longer retained. So much was this region considered out of the way till a late period, that persons who had fled from justice used often to resort thither for concealment, and some were so bold, as not unfrequently to make excursions from the place of their retreat for the purpose of committing fresh offences. Such was particularly the case with two brothers of the name of Weston, who took up their abode at Old Brathay, I think about seventy years ago. They were highwaymen, and lived there some time without being discovered, though it was known that they often disappeared, in a way, and upon errands, which could not be accounted for. Their horses were noticed as being of a choice breed, and I have heard from the Relph family, one of whom was a saddler in the town of Kendal, that they were curious in their saddles, and housings, and accoutrements of their horses. They, as I have heard, and as was universally believed, were, in the end, both taken and hanged.

'*Tall was her stature, her complexion dark, and satur-*

[1] Sir George Vandeput.

nine. — This person lived at Town-End, and was almost our next neighbour. I have little to notice concerning her beyond what is said in the poem. She was a most striking instance how far a woman may surpass in talent, in knowledge, and culture of mind, those with and among whom she lives, and yet fall below them in Christian virtues of the heart and spirit. It seemed almost, and I say it with grief, that in proportion as she excelled in the one, she failed in the other. How frequently has one to observe in both sexes the same thing, and how mortifying is the reflection!

'*As on a sunny bank the tender lamb.* — The story that follows was told to Mrs. Wordsworth and my sister, by the sister of this unhappy young woman. Every particular was exactly as I have related. The party was not known to me, though she lived at Hawkshead; but it was after I left school. The clergyman who administered comfort to her in her distress I knew well. Her sister, who told the story, was the wife of a leading yeoman in the vale of Grasmere, and they were an affectionate pair and greatly respected by every one who knew them. Neither lived to be old; and their estate, which was, perhaps, the most considerable then in the vale, and was endeared to them by many remembrances of a salutary character, not easily understood or sympathized with by those who are born to great affluence, passed to their eldest son, according to the practice of these vales, who died soon after he came into possession. He was an amiable and promising youth, but was succeeded by an only brother, a good-natured man, who fell into habits of drinking, by which he gradually reduced his property, and the other day the last acre of it was sold, and his wife and children, and he himself still surviving, have very little left to live upon; which it would not, perhaps, have been worth while to record here,

but that through all trials this woman has proved a model of patience, meekness, affectionate forbearance, and forgiveness. Their eldest son, who through the vices of his father has thus been robbed of an ancient family inheritance, was never heard to murmur or complain against the cause of their distress, and is now deservedly the chief prop of his mother's hope.

'Book VII. — The clergyman and his family described at the beginning of this book were, during many years, our principal associates in the vale of Grasmere, unless I were to except our very nearest neighbours. I have entered so particularly into the main points of their history, that I will barely testify in prose that (with the single exception of the particulars of their journey to Grasmere, which, however, was exactly copied from real life) the whole that I have said of them is as faithful to the truth as words can make it. There was much talent in the family, and the eldest son was distinguished for poetical talent, of which a specimen is given in my Notes to the Sonnets on the Duddon. Once, when in our cottage at Town-End, I was talking with him about poetry. In the course of our conversation I presumed to find fault with the versification of Pope, of whom he was an enthusiastic admirer. He defended him with a warmth that indicated much irritation; nevertheless I would not abandon my point, and said, "In compass and variety of sound your own versification surpasses his." Never shall I forget the change in his countenance and tone of voice: the storm was laid in a moment, he no longer disputed my judgment, and I passed immediately in his mind, no doubt, for as great a critic as ever lived. I ought to add, he was a clergyman and a well-educated man, and his verbal memory was the most remarkable of any individual I have known, except a Mr. Archer, an Irishman, who lived several years

in this neighbourhood, and who in this faculty was a prodigy: he afterwards became deranged, and I fear continues so if alive.

'Then follows the character of Robert Walker, for which see Notes to the Duddon.

'Next that of the *Deaf Man*, whose epitaph may be seen in the churchyard at the head of Hawes-Water, and whose qualities of mind and heart, and their benign influence in conjunction with his privation, I had from his relatives on the spot.

'The *Blind Man*, next commemorated, was John Gough, of Kendal, a man known, far beyond his neighbourhood, for his talents and attainments in natural history and science.

'Of the *Infants' Grave* next noticed, I will only say, it is an exact picture of what fell under my own observation; and all persons who are intimately acquainted with cottage life must often have observed like instances of the working of the domestic affections.

'*A volley twice repeated.* — This young volunteer bore the name of Dawson, and was younger brother, if I am not mistaken, to the prodigal of whose character and fortunes an account is given towards the beginning of the preceding book. The father of the family I knew well; he was a man of literary education and considerable experience in society, much beyond what was common among the inhabitants of the Vale. He had lived a good while in the Highlands of Scotland as a manager of ironworks at Bunaw, and had acted as clerk to one of my predecessors in the office of distributor of stamps, when he used to travel round the country collecting and bringing home the money due to Government in gold, which it may be worth while to mention, for the sake of my friends, was deposited in the cell or iron closet under the

west window, which still exists, with the iron doors that guarded the property. This, of course, was before the time of bills and notes. The two sons of this person had no doubt been led by the knowledge of their father to take more delight in scholarship, and had been accustomed, in their own minds, to take a wider view of social interests, than was usual among their associates. The premature death of this gallant young man was much lamented, and as an attendant upon the funeral, I myself witnessed the ceremony, and the effect of it as described in the poems, "Tradition tells that in Eliza's golden days," "A knight came on a war-horse," "The house is gone." The pillars of the gateway in front of the mansion remained when we first took up our abode at Grasmere. Two or three cottages still remain, which are called Knott Houses, from the name of the gentleman (I have called him a knight) concerning whom these traditions survive. He was the ancestor of the *Knott* family, formerly considerable proprietors in the district. What follows in the discourse of the "Wanderer," upon the changes he had witnessed in rural life by the introduction of machinery, is truly described from what I myself saw during my boyhood and early youth, and from what was often told me by persons of this humble calling. Happily, most happily, for these mountains, the mischief was diverted from the banks of their beautiful streams, and transferred to open and flat counties abounding in coal, where the agency of steam was found much more effectual for carrying on those demoralizing works. Had it not been for this invention, long before the present time, every torrent and river in this district would have had its factory, large and populous in proportion to the power of the water that could there be commanded. Parliament has interfered to prevent the night-work which was carried on in

these mills as actively as during the day-time, and by necessity, still more perniciously; a great disgrace to the proprietors and to the nation which could so long tolerate such unnatural proceedings.

'Reviewing, at this late period, 1843, what I put into the mouths of my interlocutors a few years after the commencement of the century, I grieve that so little progress has been made in diminishing the evils deplored, or promoting the benefits of education which the "Wanderer" anticipates. The results of Lord Ashley's labours to defer the time when children might legally be allowed to work in factories, and his endeavours to limit still further the hours of permitted labour, have fallen far short of his own humane wishes, and of those of every benevolent and right-minded man who has carefully attended to this subject; and in the present session of Parliament (1843) Sir James Graham's attempt to establish a course of religious education among the children employed in factories has been abandoned, in consequence of what might easily have been foreseen, the vehement and turbulent opposition of the Dissenters; so that, for many years to come, it may be thought expedient to leave the religious instruction of children entirely in the hands of the several denominations of Christians in the Island, each body to work according to its own means and in its own way. Such is my own confidence, a confidence I share with many others of my most valued friends, in the superior advantages, both religious and social, which attend a course of instruction presided over and guided by the clergy of the Church of England, that I have no doubt, that if but once its members, lay and clerical, were duly sensible of those benefits, their Church would daily gain ground, and rapidly, upon every shape and fashion of dissent; and in that case, a great majority in Parliament

being sensible of these benefits, the ministers of the country might be emboldened, were it necessary, to apply funds of the state to the support of education on church principles. Before I conclude, I cannot forbear noticing the strenuous efforts made at this time in Parliament by so many persons to extend manufacturing and commercial industry at the expense of agricultural, though we have recently had abundant proofs that the apprehensions expressed by the "Wanderer" were not groundless.

> "I spake of mischief by the wise diffused,
> With gladness thinking that the more it spreads
> The healthier, the securer we become;
> Delusion which a moment may destroy!"

'The Chartists are well aware of this possibility, and cling to it with an ardour and perseverance which nothing but wiser and more brotherly dealing towards the many on the part of the wealthy few can moderate or remove.

'Book IX., *towards conclusion.*

> "While from the grassy mountain's open side
> We gazed."

'The point here fixed upon in my imagination is half way up the northern side of Loughrigg Fell, from which the "Pastor" and his companions are supposed to look upwards to the sky and mountain-tops, and round the vale, with the lake lying immediately beneath them.

> "But turned, not without welcome promise given
> That he would share the pleasures and pursuits
> Of yet another summer's day."

When I reported this promise of the "Solitary," and long after, it was my wish, and I might say intention, that we should resume our wanderings and pass the borders into his native country, where, as I hoped, he might witness,

in the society of the "Wanderer," some religious ceremony — a sacrament say, in the open fields, or a preaching among the mountains, which, by recalling to his mind the days of his early childhood, when he had been present on such occasions in company with his parents and nearest kindred, might have dissolved his heart into tenderness, and so done more towards restoring the Christian faith in which he had been educated, and, with that contentedness and even cheerfulness of mind, and all that the "Wanderer" and "Pastor" by their several effusions and addresses had been unable to effect. An issue like this was in my intentions, but alas!

> "mid the wreck of is and was,
> Things incomplete and purposes betrayed
> Make sadder transits o'er thought's optic glass
> Than noblest objects utterly decayed."'

Such were Mr. Wordsworth's illustrative notices of 'THE EXCURSION.'

It is no part of the plan of these Memoirs to refer to the criticisms of those who reviewed 'The Excursion,' or any other of the poems of Wordsworth on their first appearance. Abundant information on this subject will be found in other publications.[1] It is not so surprising that 'The Excursion' should have been censured by many critics, as that *no* leading Aristarch of the day should have appeared to be disposed to claim for it or concede to it *that* place which it has now attained in the literature of England. But the expressions of condemnation which fell from the pens of the most celebrated

[1] See, for example, Coleridge's Biogr. Literaria, vol. ii. p. 115, 141, 150, 170; Edin. Rev. Nov. 1814, Oct. 1815; Southey's Life and Correspondence, vol. iv. p. 195; C. Lamb's Final Memorials, vol. i. p. 202, 214, 216.

reviewers of the day, who doomed 'The Excursion' to oblivion, are now only to be remembered as warnings against rash judgment, and as cautions against confident reliance on contemporary opinions. It is a remarkable fact, that the English public was content with a single edition of 'The Excursion,' consisting only of 500 copies, for six years. Another edition, also limited to 500 copies, was published in 1827, and satisfied the popular demand for seven years. How many thousands of copies of poems, which are now forgotten, were purchased in that time. Another main point to be recollected in this chapter of literary history is the serene equanimity and indomitable perseverance of him who was the object of the censure of popular periodicals. After adverting to certain reviews of 'The Excursion,' he says, in a letter to Southey, 'Let the age continue to love its own darkness; I shall continue to write, with, I trust, the light of Heaven upon me.'

Another fact, also worthy of record, is this. Some of Wordsworth's poetical brethren, to their honour be it spoken, felt keenly for the wrong which was done him. It extorted from Southey the well known saying, uttered on hearing that a certain celebrated critic was boasting that he had '*crushed* "The Excursion."' 'He crush "The Excursion!" Tell him he might as well fancy that he could crush Skiddaw.'[1] And the amiable Mr. Bernard Barton addressed some verses to Wordsworth, expressing his own admiration unabated by the strictures of the reviewers. Poets are said to be a 'genus irritabile,'

[1] See also Southey's Letter to Sir Walter Scott; Southey's Correspondence, vol. iv. p. 97. [In the Preface to '*Roderick*' in the collective edition of Southey's Poetical Works, Vol. IX. p. 20, will be found the animated account which, in 1838 — more than twenty years after — Southey gave of his '*saying*.' — H. R.]

and to be jealous of one another's fame. But these are two noble examples to the contrary. Wordsworth replied to Bernard Barton's tribute of veneration in the following letter:

'*Rydal Mount, near Ambleside,*
Jan. 12, 1816.

'Dear Sir,

'Though my sister, during my absence, has returned thanks in my name for the verses which you have done me the honour of addressing to me, and for the obliging letter which accompanies them, I feel it incumbent on me, on my return home, to write a few words to the same purpose, with my own hand.

'It is always a satisfaction to me to learn that I have given pleasure upon *rational* grounds; and I have nothing to object to your poetical panegyric but the occasion which called it forth. An admirer of my works, zealous as you have declared yourself to be, condescends too much when he gives way to an impulse proceeding from the ———, or indeed from any other Review. The writers in these publications, while they prosecute their inglorious employment, cannot be supposed to be in a state of mind very favourable for being affected by the finer influences of a thing so pure as genuine poetry; and as to the instance which has incited you to offer me this tribute of your gratitude, though I have not seen it, I doubt not but that it is a splenetic effusion of the conductor of that Review, who has taken a perpetual retainer from his own incapacity to plead against my claims to public approbation.*

'I differ from you in thinking that the only poetical

* [Mr. Walter Savage Landor, in one of those productions which have displayed a mastery in Latin prose and verse like that in his own language — after reprobating the class of critics here alluded to, thus goes on to apostrophize Wordsworth: — 'At qui-

lines in your address are "stolen from myself." The best verse, perhaps, is the following:

'Awfully mighty in his impotence,'

which, by way of repayment, I may be tempted to steal from you on some future occasion.

'It pleases, though it does not surprise me, to learn that, having been affected early in life by my verses, you have returned again to your old loves after some little infidelities, which you were shamed into by commerce with the scribbling and chattering part of the world. I have heard of many who, upon their first acquaintance with my poetry, have had much to get over before they could thoroughly relish it; but never of one who, having once learned to enjoy it, had ceased to value it, or survived his admiration. This is as good an external assurance as I can desire, that my inspiration is from a pure source, and that my principles of composition are trustworthy.

'With many thanks for your good wishes, and begging leave to offer mine in return,

'I remain, dear sir,

'Respectfully yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.

'*Bernard Barton, Esq.*
Woodbridge, Suffolk.'

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bus ego te vocibus compellem, vir, civis, philosophe, poeta, præstantissime! qui sæculum nostrum ut nullo priore minus gloriosum sit effeceris; quem nec domicilium longinquum, nec vita sanctissima, neque optimorum voluntas, charitas, propensio, neque hominum fere universorum reverentia, inviolatum conservavit; cujus sepulchrum, si mortuus esses anteaquam nascerentur, ut voti rei inviserent, et laudi sibi magnæ ducerent vel aspici vel credi ibidem ingemiscere.' — '*De Cultu Atque Usu Latini Sermonis. Pisis,* MDCCCXXI.' P. 215. — H. R.]

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE, OR, THE FATE OF THE NORTONS. — THANKSGIVING ODE.

THE 'White Doe of Rylstone' was published in 1815,* with a dedication by the author to his wife.† 'The earlier

* [In the early part of the same year was published an edition of the Miscellaneous Poems, bearing the title 'POEMS BY WILLIAM WORDSWORH, including Lyrical Ballads, and the Miscellaneous Pieces of the Author, with Additional Poems, a new Preface, and a supplementary Essay. In Two Volumes (8vo.) London, 1815.' Each volume is illustrated with an engraving from a picture by Sir George Beaumont, — the first a picture of the home of 'Lucy Gray'; the second of 'Peele Castle, in a Storm,' (see 'Elegiac Stanzas,' Vol. v. p. 126.) The dedication of these volumes to Sir George Beaumont is dated 'February 1, 1815': — the dedication of 'The White Doe of Rylstone' is dated 'April 20, 1815.' — H. R.]

† [It was published in a quarto volume, illustrated with an engraving from a landscape-painting by the author's friend, Sir George Beaumont. The origin of the poem was stated in this prefatory 'Advertisement':

'During the summer of 1807, the Author visited, for the first time, the beautiful scenery that surrounds Bolton Priory, in Yorkshire; and the poem of *The White Doe*, founded upon a tradition connected with the place, was composed at the close of the same year.'

The poem was shown, early in 1808, to Southey, who, in a letter to Walter Scott, dated 'Keswick, Feb. 11, 1808,' says, — 'Wordsworth has completed a most masterly poem upon the fate of the Nortons; two or three lines in the old ballad of the Rising

half of this poem,' said Mr. Wordsworth,[1] 'was composed at Stockton-upon-Tees, when Mary and I were on a visit to her eldest brother, Mr. Hutchinson, at the close of the year 1807. The country is flat, and the weather was rough. I was accustomed every day to walk to and fro under the shelter of a row of stacks, in a field at a small distance from the town, and there poured forth my verses aloud, as freely as they would come.

'When, from the visit just mentioned, we returned to Town-End, Grasmere, I proceeded with the poem.'

Mr. Wordsworth here mentioned, *obiter*, that in his walks at this time he received a wound in his foot; 'and though,' he added, 'I desisted from walking, I found that the irritation of the wounded part was kept up by the act of *composition*, to a degree that made it necessary to give my constitution a holiday. A rapid cure was the consequence.

'Poetic excitement, when accompanied by protracted labour in composition, has throughout my life brought on more or less bodily derangement. Nevertheless I am, at the close of my seventy-third year, in what may be called excellent health. So that intellectual labour is not, necessarily, unfavourable to longevity. But perhaps I ought

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in the North gave him the hint. The story affected me more deeply than I wish to be affected; younger readers, however, will not object to the depth of the distress, — and nothing was ever more ably treated. He is looking, too, for a narrative subject, to be pitched in a lower key. I have recommended to him that part of Amadis wherein he appears as Beltenebros, — which is what Bernardo Tasso had originally chosen, and which is in itself as complete as could be desired.' Southey's Life and Correspondence, Vol. III. Chap. XIV. p. 131. — H. R.]

[1] MSS. I. F.

here to add, that mine has been generally carried on out of doors.

'Let me here say a few words of this poem, by way of criticism. The subject being taken from feudal times has led to its being compared to some of Walter Scott's poems, that belong to the same age and state of society. The comparison is inconsiderate. Sir Walter pursued the customary and very natural course of conducting an action, presenting various turns of fortune, to some outstanding point on which the mind might rest as a termination or catastrophe. The course I attempted to pursue is entirely different. Everything that is attempted by the principal personages in the "White Doe," *fails*, so far as its object is external and substantial: so far as it is moral and spiritual, it *succeeds*. The heroine of the poem knows that her duty is not to interfere with the current of events, either to forward or delay them; but —

"To abide
The shock, and finally secure
O'er pain and grief a triumph pure."

This she does in obedience to her brother's injunction, as most suitable to a mind and character that, under previous trials, had been proved to accord with his. She achieves this, not without aid from the communication with the inferior creature, which often leads her thoughts to revolve upon the past with a tender and humanizing influence that exalts rather than depresses her.* The anticipated beatification, if I may so say, of her mind, and the apotheosis of the companion of her solitude, are the points at which

* [See the motto to this poem — Lord Bacon's wise sentences on the degrading effects of atheism, with the illustration taken from the relation in which man stands, as a '*Melior Natura*,' to the inferior creatures. — H. R.]

the poem aims, and constitute its legitimate catastrophe; far too *spiritual* a one for instant or widely spread sympathy, but not therefore the less fitted to make a deep and permanent impression upon that class of minds, who think and feel more independently than the many do of the surfaces of things and interests transitory, because belonging more to the outward and social forms of life than to its internal spirit.

'How insignificant a thing, for example, does *personal* prowess appear, compared with the fortitude of patience and heroic martyrdom; in other words, with struggles for the sake of principle, in preference to victory gloried in for its own sake!'*

To these remarks may be added the following, in a

* [The following prefatory lines were introduced in the poem in the edition of the Poetical Works of 1836-7; the six first lines had been written many years before in '*The Borderers*' (Act III. last scene) where they also appear:

'Action is transitory — a step, a blow,
The motion of a muscle — this way or that —
'T is done; and in the after-vacancy
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed:
Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
And has the nature of infinity.
Yet through that darkness (infinite though it seem
And irremoveable) gracious openings lie,
By which the soul — with patient steps of thought
Now toiling, wafted now on wings of prayer —
May pass in hope, and, though from mortal bonds
Yet undelivered, rise with sure ascent
Even to the fountain-head of peace divine. M. S.'

In the first edition of 'The White Doe,' the sonnet beginning, 'Weak is the will of man, his judgment blind' (now one of the 'Miscellaneous Sonnets'), stood as prefatory lines. — H. R.]

letter from the writer to his friend Archdeacon Wrangham:

'*Thanksgiving Day, Jan.* 1816.
Rydal Mount.

'My dear Wrangham,

'You have given me an additional mark of that friendly disposition, and those affectionate feelings which I have long known you to possess, by writing to me after my long and unjustifiable silence.

. . . . . .

'Of "The White Doe" I have little to say, but that I hope it will be acceptable to the intelligent, for whom alone it is written. It starts from a high point of imagination, and comes round, through various wanderings of that faculty, to a still higher — nothing less than the apotheosis of the animal who gives the first of the two titles to the poem. And as the poem thus begins and ends with pure and lofty imagination, every motive and impetus that actuates the persons introduced is from the same source; a kindred spirit pervades, and is intended to harmonize the whole. Throughout, objects (the banner, for instance) derive their influence, not from properties inherent in them, not from what they *are* actually in themselves, but from such as are *bestowed* upon them by the minds of those who are conversant with or affected by those objects. Thus the poetry, if there be any in the work, proceeds, as it ought to do, from the *soul of man*, communicating its creative energies to the images of the external world. But, too much of this.

'Most faithfully yours,
'W. WORDSWORTH.'

The letter just quoted was written on the Day of general

Thanksgiving for the successful termination of the war, in 1816.

This national festival was hailed by him in a lyrical effusion,[1] which presents a happy contrast to that state of feeling described by him in 'The Prelude,' as having *formerly* existed in his mind; which, after the declaration of war with France, was not in sympathy with the policy of his own country, and

> 'When, in the congregation bending all
> To their great Father, prayers were offered up,
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How different from this is the following language, in the 'Thanksgiving Ode,'

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[1] Vol. iii. p. 102.
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this ode was composed, almost extempore, in front of Rydal Mount, before church-time, and on such a morning, and with precisely such objects before my eyes, as are here described. The view taken of Napoleon's character and proceedings is little in accordance with that taken by some historians and critical philosophers. I am glad and proud of the difference; and trust that this series of poems, infinitely below the subject as they are, will survive to counteract in unsophisticated minds the pernicious and degrading tendency of those views and doctrines that lead to idolatry of power *as power*, and, in that false splendour, to lose sight of its real nature and constitution, as it often acts for the gratification of its possessor, without reference to a beneficial end; an infirmity that has characterized men of all ages, classes, and employments, since *Nimrod* became a *mighty hunter before the Lord.*'[1] *

Concerning the same subject, he writes to his friend, the Poet Laureate, referring at the same time to certain criticisms on 'The White Doe.'

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* [See also on this subject the Sonnet, in the series 'dedicated to National Independence and Liberty,' beginning, 'Here pause: the poet claims at least this praise,' and containing that high moral aspiration, —

'Never may from our souls one truth depart —
That an accursed thing it is to gaze
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Vol. iii. p. 86. — H. R.]

[1] Gen. x. 9.

Thanksgiving for the successful termination of the war, in 1816.

This national festival was hailed by him in a lyrical effusion,[1] which presents a happy contrast to that state of feeling described by him in 'The Prelude,' as having *formerly* existed in his mind; which, after the declaration of war with France, was not in sympathy with the policy of his own country, and

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present made comparatively little progress on the continent of Europe. Byron and Scott have been made familiar by translations to the inhabitants of France and Germany, but few poems of Wordsworth have found their way into their languages. I know not whether M. Lapperberg, the celebrated historian of Hamburgh, ever executed his design of rendering some of these poems into German; but in announcing that intention in a letter to Mr. Wordsworth, in 1840, he expressed a regret, in which he said the distinguished Tieck participated, that the writings of the author of 'The Excursion' were not more known to the German public.

Such being the case, it may be regarded as a happy circumstance, that among Mr. Wordsworth's writings there exists a class sufficiently numerous to show how large and expansive his faculties and feelings were, in which the poet divests himself of all personal and local associations, and bidding farewell to his own age and country, throws himself back upon antiquity, and merges all his own individuality in a deep and abundant feeling of sympathy with persons of the historic and heroic ages of Greece and Rome, and thus extends, as it were, the limits of human brotherhood, and gives new life to what is extinct, and enfolds the distant members of the human family in a comprehensive embrace of love.

The reader will perceive that I refer to such poems as 'Laodamia' and 'Dion,' and he will see the reason why they are placed together as specimens of a class.

In 'LAODAMIA' the subordination of what is sensual to what is spiritual, and the subjection of the human passions to the government of reason, is taught in language of exquisite delicacy and grace, well fitted to the solemnity and sanctity of the subject, at the same time that the balance between the claims of affection and duty is preserved

with a steady hand. Laodamia forfeits the favour of heaven by a passionate abuse of it. But the trees on the tomb of Protesilaus pay a natural homage to the affections, by withering at the sight of Troy. The universality of the laws of reason and affection, and the necessity of a just equipoise between them, for the maintenance of human society, could not be more happily displayed than by this example derived from the ante-homeric age, and versified in language which, by its sweetness and beauty, appears to express the symphony which prevails in nature and society, when all the organic elements are in melodious harmony with each other. And this is done in the poem of 'Laodamia.'

But it is not my purpose to compose a critical review of these poems. I will, therefore, refrain; and content myself with requesting the reader to apply the principle here illustrated to the poem of 'DION,'[1] which displays, in a most picturesque manner, an exemplification of the universality and omnipotence of that other great law of the moral world, viz. —

> 'Him, only him, the shield of Jove defends,
> Whose *means* are fair and spotless as his *ends*.'

These poems, as has been stated, were written in 1814–16. About this time Mr. Wordsworth's attention was given to the education of his eldest son: this occupation appears to have been the occasion of their composition. In preparing his son for his university career, he reperused the principal Latin poets; and doubtless the careful study of their works was not without a beneficial influence on his own. It imparted variety and richness to his conceptions, and shed new graces on his style, and rescued his poems from the charge of mannerism.

[1] Vol. ii. p. 164.

Among the fruits of this course of reading, was a translation of some of the earlier books of VIRGIL'S ÆNEID. Three books were finished. This version was not executed in blank verse, but in rhyme; not, however, in the style of Pope, but with greater freedom and vigour. A specimen of this translation was contributed by Mr. Wordsworth to the 'Philological Museum,' printed at Cambridge in 1832.[1] It was accompanied with the following letter from the author: —

TRANSLATION OF PART OF THE FIRST BOOK OF THE ÆNEID.[2]

*To the Editor of the Philological Museum.**

'Your letter reminding me of an expectation I some time since held out to you, of allowing some specimens of my translation from the 'Æneid' to be printed in the 'Philological Museum,' was not very acceptable; for I had abandoned the thought of ever sending into the world any part of that experiment — for it was nothing more — an experiment begun for amusement, and, I now think, a

[1] Vol. i. p. 382.

[2] Philological Museum, edit. Camb. 1832, vol. i. p. 382.

* [The editor was Mr. Wordsworth's friend, the Rev. Julius Charles Hare, now Archdeacon of Lewes, — one of the translators of Niebuhr's History of Rome, and one of the authors of the 'Guesses at Truth, by Two Brothers.' See the dedication to Wordsworth of the second edition of the 'Guesses at Truth,' in which Mr. Hare, writing in 1838, after acknowledging his own deep obligations to the poet's writings, says — 'Many will join in my prayer, that health and strength of body and mind may be granted to you, to complete the noble works which you have still in store, so that men may learn more worthily to understand and appreciate what a glorious gift God bestows on a nation, when he gives them a poet.' P. VII. — H. R.]

less fortunate one than when I first named it to you. Having been displeased, in modern translations, with the additions of incongruous matter, I began to translate with a resolve to keep clear of that fault, by adding nothing; but I became convinced that a spirited translation can scarcely be accomplished in the English language without admitting a principle of compensation. On this point, however, I do not wish to insist; and merely send the following passage, taken at random, from a wish to comply with your request.

'W. W.'

The following letters, on the same subject, were addressed by Mr. Wordsworth to Earl Lonsdale.

'My Lord,

'Many thanks for your obliging letter. I shall be much gratified if you happen to like my translation, and thankful for any remarks with which you may honour me. I have made so much progress with the second book, that I defer sending the former till that is finished. It takes in many places a high tone of passion, which I would gladly succeed in rendering. When I read Virgil in the original I am moved; but not so much so by the translation; and I cannot but think this owing to a defect in the diction, which I have endeavoured to supply, with what success you will easily be enabled to judge.

'Ever, my Lord,

'Most faithfully your obliged friend and servant,

'Wm. Wordsworth.'

'*Feb.* 5, [1829.]

'My Lord,

'I am truly obliged by your friendly and frank communication. May I beg that you would add to the favour,

by marking with a pencil some of the passages that are faulty, in your view of the case? We seem pretty much of opinion upon the subject of rhyme. Pentameters, where the sense has a close of some sort at every two lines, may be rendered in regularly closed couplets; but hexameters (especially the Virgilian, that run the lines into each other for a great length) cannot. I have long been persuaded that Milton formed his blank verse upon the model of the Georgics and the Æneid, and I am so much struck with this resemblance, that I should have attempted Virgil in blank verse, had I not been persuaded that no ancient author can be with advantage so rendered. Their religion, their warfare, their course of action and feeling, are too remote from modern interest to allow it. We require every possible help and attraction of sound, in our language, to smooth the way for the admission of things so remote from our present concerns. My own notion of translation is, that it cannot be too literal, provided three faults be avoided: *baldness*, in which I include all that takes from dignity; and *strangeness*, or *uncouthness*, including harshness; and lastly, attempts to convey meanings which, as they cannot be given but by languid circumlocutions, cannot in fact be said to be given at all. I will trouble you with an instance in which I fear this fault exists. Virgil, describing Æneas's voyage, third book, verse 551, says—

> "Hinc sinus Herculei, si vera est fama, Tarenti
> Cernitur."

I render it thus:

> "Hence we behold the bay that bears the name
> Of proud Tarentum, proud to share the fame
> Of Hercules, though by a dubious claim."

I was unable to get the meaning with tolerable harmony into fewer words, which are more than to a modern reader, perhaps, it is worth.

'I feel much at a loss, without the assistance of the marks which I have requested, to take an exact measure of your Lordship's feelings with regard to the diction. To save you the trouble of reference, I will transcribe two passages from Dryden; first, the celebrated appearance of Hector's ghost to Æneas. Æneas thus addresses him:

> "O light of Trojans and support of Troy,
> Thy father's champion, and thy country's joy,
> O long expected by thy friends, from whence
> Art thou returned, so late for our defence?
> Do we behold thee, wearied as we are
> With length of labours and with toils of war?
> After so many funerals of thy own,
> Art thou restored to thy declining town?"

This I think not an unfavourable specimen of Dryden's way of treating the solemnly pathetic passages. Yet, surely, here is *nothing* of the *cadence* of the original, and little of its spirit. The second verse is not in the original, and ought not to have been in Dryden; for it anticipates the beautiful hemistich,

> "Sat patriæ Priamoque datum."

By the by, there is the same sort of anticipation in a spirited and harmonious couplet preceding:

> "Such as he was when by *Pelides slain*
> Thessalian coursers dragged him o'er the plain."

This introduction of Pelides here is not in Virgil, because it would have prevented the effect of

> "Redit exuvias indutus Achillei."

'There is a striking solemnity in the answer of Pantheus to Æneas:

"Venit summa dies et ineluctabile tempus
Dardaniæ: fuimus Troës, fuit Ilium, et ingens
Gloria Teucrorum," &c.

Dryden thus gives it:

"Then Pantheus, with a groan,
Troy is no more, and Ilium was a town.
The fatal day, the appointed hour is come
When wrathful Jove's irrevocable doom
Transfers the Trojan state to Grecian hands.
The fire consumes the town, the foe commands."

'My own translation runs thus; and I quote it because it occurred to my mind immediately on reading your Lordship's observations:

"'Tis come, the final hour,
Th' inevitable close of Dardan power
Hath come! we *have* been Trojans, Ilium *was*,
And the great name of Troy; now all things pass
To Argos. So wills angry Jupiter,
Amid a burning town the Grecians domineer."

'I cannot say that "*we have been*" and "Ilium *was*," are as sonorous sounds as "fuimus," and "fuit;" but these latter must have been as familiar to the Romans as the former to ourselves. I should much like to know if your Lordship disapproves of my translation here. I have one word to say upon ornament. It was my wish and labour that my translation should have far more of the *genuine* ornaments of Virgil than my predecessors. Dryden has been very careful of these, and profuse of his own, which seem to me very rarely to harmonize with those of Virgil; as, for example, describing Hector's appearance in the passage above alluded to,

"A *bloody shroud*, he seemed, and *bath'd* in tears.
I wept to see the *visionary* man."

Again,

"And all the wounds he for his country bore
Now streamed afresh, and with *new purple ran*."

I feel it, however, to be too probable that my translation is deficient in ornament, because I must unavoidably have lost many of Virgil's, and have never without reluctance attempted a compensation of my own. Had I taken the liberties of my predecessors, Dryden especially, I could have translated nine books with the labour that three have cost me. The third book, being of a humbler character than either of the former, I have treated with rather less scrupulous apprehension, and have interwoven a little of my own; and, with permission, I will send it, ere long, for the benefit of your Lordship's observations, which really will be of great service to me if I proceed. Had I begun the work fifteen years ago, I should have finished it with pleasure; at present, I fear it will take more time than I either can or ought to spare. I do not think of going beyond the fourth book.

'As to the MS., be so kind as to forward it at your leisure to me, at Sir George Beaumont's, Coleorton Hall, near Ashby, whither I am going in about ten days. May I trouble your Lordship with our respectful compliments to Lady Lonsdale?

'Believe [me] ever

'Your Lordship's faithful

'And obliged friend and servant,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

The following letter from S. T. Coleridge relates to the translation of Virgil, which Wordsworth sent him in manuscript. The date does not appear.

'Dear Wordsworth,

'Three whole days the going through the first book cost me, though only to find fault, but I cannot find fault in pen and ink, without thinking over and over again, and without some sort of an attempt to suggest the alteration; and in so doing how soon an hour is gone, so many half seconds up to half minutes are lost in leaning back in one's chair, and looking up, in the bodily act of contracting the muscles of the brows and forehead, and unconsciously attending to the sensation. Had I the MS. with me for five or six months, so as to amuse myself off and on, without any solicitude as to a given day; and could I be persuaded that if as well done as the nature of the thing (viz., a *translation of Virgil*, in English) renders possible, it would not raise, but simply sustain, your well merited fame for pure diction, where what is not idiom is never other than logically correct; I doubt not that the inequalities could be removed. But I am haunted by the apprehension that I am not feeling or thinking in the same spirit with you, at one time, and at another *too much* in the spirit of your writings. Since Milton, I know of no poet with so many *felicities* and unforgetable lines and stanzas as you. And to read, therefore, page after page without a single *brilliant* note, depresses me, and I grow peevish with you for having wasted your time on a work *so* much below you, that you cannot *stoop* and *take*. Finally, my conviction is, that you undertake an *impossibility*, and that there is no medium between a prose version and one on the avowed principle of *compensation* in the widest sense, *i. e.* manner, genius, total effect: I confine myself to *Virgil* when I say this.

'I must now set to work with *all* my powers and thoughts to my Leighton, and then to my logic, and then to my *opus maximum!* if, indeed, it shall please God to

spare me so long, which I have had too many warnings of late (more than my nearest friends know of) not to doubt. My kind love to Dorothy.

'S. T. COLERIDGE.

'*Monday Night.*'

I will now insert certain notices from the author, in reference to the other poems mentioned above.[1]

Laodamia.[2] — Rydal Mount, 1814. 'This was written at the same time as "Dion," and "Artegal and Elidure."[3] The incident of the trees growing and withering put the subject into my thoughts; and I wrote with the hope of giving it a loftier tone than, so far as I know, has been given to it by any of the ancients who have treated of it. It cost me more trouble than almost anything of equal length I have ever written.'

Dion. — 'This poem was first introduced by a stanza that I have since transferred to the notes, for reasons there given; and I cannot comply with the request expressed by some of my friends, that the rejected stanza should be restored. I hope they will be content if it be hereafter immediately attached to the poem, instead of its being degraded to a place in the notes.'*

Ode to Lycoris.[4] — 'This poem, as well as the preceding and the two that follow, were composed in front of Rydal Mount, and during my walks in the neighbourhood. Nine tenths of my verses have been murmured out in the open air. And here let me repeat what I believe has

[1] MSS. I. F.

[2] Vol. ii. p. 158.

[3] Vol. ii. p. 164; vol. i. p. 200.

[4] Vol. iv. p. 220-222.

* [See the rejected stanza in order to understand the desire for the restoration of it, and still more to appreciate this instance of the poet's severe self-control and discipline, and his dutiful regard to the principles of his Art. — H. R.]

already appeared in print. One day a stranger, having walked round the garden and grounds of Rydal Mount, asked of one of the female servants, who happened to be at the door, permission to see her master's study. "This," said she, leading him forward, "is my master's *library*, where he keeps his books; but his *study* is out of doors." After a long absence from home, it has more than once happened that some one of my cottage neighbours (not of the double-coach-house cottages) has said, "Well, there he is: we are glad to hear him *booing* about again." Once more in excuse for so much egotism, let me say these notes are written for my familiar friends, and at their earnest request. Another time a gentleman, whom James[1] had conducted through the grounds, asked him what kind of plants throve best there. After a little consideration, he answered, "Laurels." "That is," said the stranger, "as it should be. Don't you know that the laurel is the emblem of poetry, and that poets used, on public occasions, to be crowned with it?" James stared when the question was first put, but was doubtless much pleased with the information.

'The discerning reader, who is aware that in the poem of "Ellen Irwin,"[2] being desirous of throwing the reader at once out of the old ballad, so as, if possible, to preclude a comparison between that mode of dealing with the subject and the mode I meant to adopt, may here, perhaps, perceive that this poem originated in the four *last* lines of the *first stanza*. These specks of snow reflected in the lake; and so transferred, as it were, to the subaqueous sky, reminded me of the swans which the fancy of the ancient classic poets yoked to the car of Venus. Hence

[1] Mr. Wordsworth's faithful and respected man-servant.

[2] Vol. iii. p. 10.

the tenor of the whole first stanza, and the name of Lycoris, which with some readers who think mythology and classical allusion too far-fetched, and therefore more or less unnatural and affected, will tend to unrealize the sentiment that pervades these verses. But surely one who has written so much in verse as I have done may be allowed to retrace his steps into the region of fancy, which delighted him in his boyhood, when he first became acquainted with the Greek and Roman poets.

'Before I read Virgil I was so strongly attached to Ovid, whose Metamorphoses I read at school, that I was quite in a passion whenever I found him, in books of criticism, placed below Virgil. As to Homer, I was never weary of travelling over the scenes through which he led me. Classical literature affected me by its own beauty.

'But the truths of Scripture having been entrusted to the dead languages, and these fountains having been recently laid open at the Reformation, an importance and a *sanctity* were at that period attached to classical literature that extended, as is obvious in Milton's Lycidas, for example, both as to its spirit and form, in a degree that can never be revived. No doubt the hackneyed and lifeless use into which mythology fell towards the close of the seventeenth century, and which continued through the eighteenth, disgusted the general reader with all allusion to it in modern verse. And though, in deference to this disgust, and also in a measure participating in it, I abstained in my earlier writings from all introduction of pagan fable, surely, even in its humble form, it may ally itself with real sentiment, as I can truly affirm it did in the present case.'

Pillar of Trajan.[1] — 'These verses had better, perhaps,

[1] Vol. iii. p. 181.

be transferred to the class of "Italian Poems." I had observed in the newspaper that the Pillar of Trajan was given at Oxford as a subject for a prize poem in English verse. I had a wish, perhaps, that my son, who was then an under-graduate at Oxford, should try his fortune; and I told him so: but he, not having been accustomed to write verse, wisely declined to enter on the task; whereupon I showed him these lines as a proof of what might, without difficulty, be done on such a subject.'

So far Mr. Wordsworth's notes on these poems. I will conclude this chapter with observing, that though Mr. Wordsworth's son abstained from writing *English* verse, on the occasion above mentioned, yet he has produced verses in *Latin* (some of them, translations from his father's poems and printed with them by him, and others original,) which entitle him to a high place among the English composers in Latin verse. Doubtless he owed much to the training he received in reading the Latin poets with his father, and in learning from him to contemplate their beauties with a poet's eye.[1]

[1] The following unpublished Latin Epistle, addressed to the Poet in 1844, by his son, then at Maderia, has been kindly communicated by the author, the Rev. John Wordsworth, now rector of Brigham, near Cockermouth, and will be perused with interest for its own merits, and from its connection with him to whom it is inscribed.

EPISTOLA AD PATREM SUUM.

I PETE longinquas, non segnis Epistola, terras,
I pete, Rydaliæ conscia saxa lyræ:
I pete, quà valles rident, sylvæque lacusque,
Quamvis Arctoo pænè sub axe jacent.
Parvos quære Lares, non aurea Tecta, poetæ,
Qui tamen ingenii sceptraque mentis habet.

Quid faciat genitor? valeatne, an cura senilis
Opprimat? Ista refer, filius ista rogat.
Scire velit, quare venias tu scripta *latine?*
Dic 'fugio linguam, magne poeta, tuam!
Quem Regina jubet circumdare tempora lauro,
Quem verè vatem sæcula nostra vocant.'
Inde refer gressus, responsaque tradita curæ
Fida tuæ, numeris in loca digna senis,
Hæc ego tradiderim, majoribus ire per altum
Nunc velis miserum me mea musa rapit.
Solvimus è portu, navisque per æquora currit
Neptuni auxilio fluctifragisque rotis.
Neptunus videt attonitus, Neptunia conjux,
Omnis et æquorei nympha comata chori.
Radimus Hispanum litus, loca saxea crebris
Gallorum belli nobilitatà malis.
Haud mora, sunt visæ Gades,* urbs fabula quondam,
Claraque ab Herculeo nomine, clara suo.
Hanc magnam cognovit Arabs, Romanus eandem,
Utraque gens illi vimque decusque tulit.
Hora brevis, fragilisque viris! similisque ruina
Viribus humanis omnia facta manet.
Pulchra jaces, olim Carthaginis æmula magnæ.
Nataque famosæ non inhonesta Tyri!
En! ratibus navale caret, nautis caret alnus,
Mercatorque fugit dives inane Forum.
Templa vacant pompâ, nitidisque theatra catervis,
Tristis et it fædâ fœmina virque viâ.
Segnis in officiis, nec rectus ad æthera miles
Pauperis et vestes, armaque juris habet.
Sic gens quæque perit,† quando civilia bella
Viscera divellunt, jusque fidesque fugit.
Auspiciis lætam nostris lux proxima pandit
Te, Calpe ‡ celsis imperiosa jugis.
Urbs munimen habet nullo quassabile bello,
Claustrum Tyrrhenis, claustrum et Atlantis, aquis.

* Cadiz.
† Hispania hoc tempore bello civili divulsa fuit.
‡ Gibraltar.

Undique nam vastæ sustentant mœnia rupes,
Quæ torvè in terras inque tuentur aquas.
Arteque sunt mirâ sectæ per saxa cavernæ
Atria sanguineo sæva sacrata Deo.
Urbs invicta tamen populis commercia tuta
Præbet, et in portus illicit inque Forum.
Hìc Mercator adest Maurus cui rebus agendis
Ah! nimis est cordi Punica prisca fides;
Afer et è mediis Libyæ sitientis arenis,
Suetus in immundâ vivere barbarie;
Multus et æquoreis, ut quondam, Graius in undis,
Degener, antiquum sic probat ille genus;
Niliacæ potator aquæ, Judæus, et omne
Litus Tyrrhenum quos, et Atlantis, alit.
Hos quàm dissimiles (linguæ sive ora notentur)
Hos quàm felices pace Britannus habet!
Anglia! dum pietas et honos, dum nota per orbem
Sit tibi in intacto pectore prisca fides;
Dum pia cura tibi, magnos meruisse triumphos,
Justaque per populos jura tulisse feros;
Longinquas teneat tua vasta potentia terras,
Et maneat Calpe gloria magna Tibi!
Insula Atlantæis assurgit ab æquoris undis,
Insula flammigero semper amata Deo,
Seu teneat celsi flagrantia signa Leonis,
Seu gyro Pisces interiora petat.
'Hìc ver assiduum atque alienis mensibus æstas,'
Flavus et autumnus frugibus usque tumet.
Non jacet Ionio felicior Insula ponto,
Ulla, nec Eoi fluctibus oceani.
Vix, Madeira! tuum nunc refert dicere nomen,
Floribus, et Bacchi munere pingue solum.
Te vetus haud vanis cumulavit laudibus ætas,
O fortunato conspicienda choro!
Hæc nunc terra sinu nos detinet alma, proculque
A Patriæ curis, anxietate domi.
Sic cepisse ferunt humanæ oblivia curæ
Quisquis Lethææ pocula sumpsit aquæ:
Sic semota sequi studiisque odiisque docebas
Otia discipulos, docte Epicure, tuos.

Sed non ulla dies grato sine sole, nec ullo
Fruge carens hortus tempore *, fronde nemus ; †
Nec levis ignotis oneratus odoribus aer,
Quales doctus equum flectere novit Arabs ;
Nec cæcæ quacunque jacent sub rupe cavernæ, ‡
Queis nunquam radiis Phœbus adire potest ;
Nec currentis aquæ strepitus, § nec saxa, petensque
Mons || excelsa suis sidera culminibus ;
Nec tranquilla quies, rerumque oblivia, ponti
Suadebunt iterum solicitare vias !
Rideat at quamvis hæc vultu terra sereno,
Tabescit pravo gens malefida jugo :
Dum sedet heu ! tristis morborum pallor in ore,
Crebraque anhelanti pectore tussis inest.
Ambitus et luxus, totoque accersita mundo,
Queis omnis populus quoque sub axe perit ;
Famæ dira sitis, rerumque onerosa cupido.
Raptaque ab irato templa diesque Deo,
Supplicium non lene suum, pœnasque tulerunt ;
Sæpè petis proprio, vir miser, ense latus !
Uxor adhuc ægros dilecta resuscitat artus ;
Anxia cura suis, anxia cura mihi.
Altera quodque dies jam roboris attulit, illud
Altera dura suis febribus abstulerit.
Aurea mens illi, mollique in pectore corda,
Et clarum longâ nobilitate genus.
Quanquàm sæpe trahunt Libycum non ¶ aera sanum,
(Gratia magna Dei), pignora nostra vigent.
Jamque vale grandæve Pater, grandævaque Mater,
Tuque O dilecto conjuge læta soror !

* Sunt hibernis mensibus aurea mala.

† Laureæ sylvæ sunt.

‡ Antris abundat Insula.

§ Multos rivos naturâ, mirâque humani ingenii arte constructos continet Madeira.

|| Pace Lusitanorum Insula nil nisi mons est, rectis culminibus mari conspicua.

¶ Ventus ex Africa —*Leste.*

Quæque pias nobis partes cognata ferebas
Nomina vana cadunt, Tu mihi Mater eras;
Ingenioque mari, pietate ornata fideque
Sanguine nulla domûs, semper amore, soror;
Tu quoque, care, vale, Frater, quamvis procul absis,
Per virides campos quà petit æquor Eden.
Denique tota domus, cunctique valete propinqui,
Carmina plura mihi, musa manusque negat.

Madeiræ, Martiis Calendis,
1844.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

LETTER TO A FRIEND OF BURNS. — LETTER ON MONUMENTS TO LITERARY MEN.

In the year 1815, Mr. Wordsworth was consulted by a friend of Robert Burns, John Gray, Esq., of Edinburgh, on the best mode of vindicating the reputation of Burns, which, it was said, had been much injured by the publication of Dr. Currie's Life and Correspondence of the Scotch Poet. In a reply, afterwards published,* to this inquiry, Mr. Wordsworth recommends that a brief Life from the pen of Mr. Gilbert Burns, the poet's brother, should be prefixed to his works; he then adds, that 'a more copious narrative would be expected from a brother, and some

* [The title of this pamphlet was 'A Letter to a friend of Robert Burns, occasioned by an intended republication of the account of the Life of Burns, by Dr. Currie, and of the selection made by him from his Letters, by William Wordsworth. London, 1816.' The proofs of this publication and of 'The Thanksgiving Ode' were corrected by Charles Lamb, who says of the former — 'The letter I read with unabated satisfaction. Such a thing was wanted; called for. The parallel of Cotton with Burns I heartily approved of. Iz. Walton hallows any page in which his reverend name appears.' Letter to Wordsworth, of which the date was accurately given, '26th April, 1816,' and wrongly changed by Lamb's biographer to 1818. 'Final Memorials of Charles Lamb.' Chap. VI. *ad fin.* — H. R.]

allowance ought to be made, in this and other respects, for an expectation so natural.'[1]

He next expresses his own opinion as to the course to be pursued in reference to the charges made against the poet's moral character.

'I am not sure,' he says, 'that it would not be best, at this day, explicitly to declare to what degree Robert Burns had given way to pernicious habits, and, as nearly as may be, to fix the point to which his moral character had been degraded. It is a disgraceful feature of the times that this measure should be necessary; most painful to think that a *brother* should have such an office to perform. But, if Gilbert Burns be conscious that the subject will bear to be so treated, he has no choice; the duty has been imposed upon him by the errors into which the former biographer has fallen.'

From considering the circumstances of Burns, he then proceeds to discuss the matter more at large. 'Your feelings, I trust, go along with mine; and, rising from this individual case to a general view of the subject, you will probably agree with me in opinion that biography, though differing in some essentials from works of fiction, is nevertheless, like them, an *art*, — an art, the laws of which are determined by the imperfections of our nature, and the constitution of society. Truth is not here, as in the sciences, and in natural philosophy, to be sought without scruple, and promulgated for its own sake; upon the mere chance of its being serviceable; but only for obviously justifying purposes, moral or intellectual.'[2]

He then pronounces his opinion thus: 'Only to Philosophy enlightened by the affections does it belong justly to

[1] Letter to a Friend of Burns. Lond. 1816, p. 37.
[2] Ibid. p. 14.

estimate the claims of the deceased on the one hand, and of the present and future generations on the other, and to strike a balance between them.'[1]

He proceeds to say, 'Such Philosophy runs a risk of becoming extinct among us, if the coarse intrusions into the recesses, the gross breaches upon the sanctities, of domestic life, to which we have lately been more and more accustomed, are to be regarded as indications of a vigorous state of public feeling — favourable to the maintenance of the liberties of our country. Intelligent lovers of freedom are from necessity bold and hardy lovers of truth; but, according to the measure in which their love is intelligent, it is attended with a finer discrimination, and a more sensitive delicacy. The wise and good (and all others being lovers of license rather than of liberty are in fact slaves) respect, as one of the noblest characteristics of Englishmen, that jealousy of familiar approach, which, while it contributes to the maintenance of private dignity, is one of the most efficacious guardians of rational public freedom.'[2]

He proceeds to consider the biography of authors. 'Our business is with their books — to understand and enjoy them.' He deprecates biographies 'on the Boswellian plan,' and he confesses that he would *not* be likely to rejoice if he were to hear that 'records of Horace and his contemporaries composed upon that plan, were unearthed among the ruins of Herculaneum.' 'I should dread,' he says, 'to disfigure the beautiful ideal of the memorial of those illustrious persons with incongruous features.'[3]

[1] Letter to a Friend of Burns, p. 15. [2] Ibid. p. 16.

[3] Ibid. p. 18. Some interesting and valuable observations of a similar character to the above will be found in Mr. Coleridge's 'Friend,' No. 21. [These observations will be found in the later

Catullus has ventured to say, that, although a poet himself ought to be pure, it was not requisite that his poetry should be so, — a sentiment which evinces a very low estimate of the functions of a poet, in the age in which it was uttered. Mr. Wordsworth's proposition is very different from this. Provided the poetry be agreeable and instructive, he would not inquire very minutely into the character of the poet. Perhaps this may be reasonable and wise, *if* the poet's life will not bear to be inquired into. In *that* case, it would be to be regretted, for the sake of society, that the merits of the poetry in a moral point of view should be marred by the demerits of the poet. But I apprehend, if a poet be regarded as a moral teacher (and such surely is the case), the effect of his teaching will be powerful and salutary in proportion as his teaching is seen to have been embodied in his own life; or, to use the words of another Latin poet slightly modified,

> 'Sic agitur censura, et sic exempla parantur,
> Cum Vates, alios quod *docet*, ipse *facit*.'

The sentiments expressed in this Letter by Mr. Wordsworth may serve as a check to a spirit which authors themselves, no less than the public, have been not slow to

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editions of 'The Friend,' in the latter part of the second volume. 'The spirit of genuine biography is in nothing more conspicuous, than in the firmness with which it withstands the cravings of worthless curiosity, as distinguished from the thirst after useful knowledge.' Vol. II. p. 235, edit. of 1837. See also in the note at the end of this chapter the earnest poetic protest pronounced by Wordsworth's successor in the Laureateship, against the abuses of biography discussed in the 'Letter to a Friend of Burns.' The piece has not yet appeared among Mr. Tennyson's Poems. — H. R.]

encourage in our own day. How many writers have ensconced the public in a confessional, and have knelt down, as it were, like penitents, and have whispered secrets into the ear of the world! This auricular confession in the streets is a vice which needs to be reprobated. Scaliger said, that it was very impertinent in Montaigne to imagine that the world cared which he liked best — white wine or red. And how much vanity as well as profligacy is there in the notion, that it imports the public to know from an author's own lips what his sensations are when he is pursuing a course of vicious indulgence! Surely that kind of writing cannot be too severely censured which is founded in a reckless renunciation, on the part of the author, of all feeling of reverence and modesty towards the public as well as himself.

This Letter may also be of use in tempering the inquisitive curiosity, and repressing the eager craving (which appear now to be rife), for a knowledge of minute details in the lives of celebrated men. 'Græca res est, *nihil velare*,' said the elder Pliny, somewhat sarcastically; and what the Roman philosopher condemned appears now to be becoming an English fashion. We require to be reminded, that *facts*, great and small, minutely registered with indiscriminate precision, do not constitute ***Truth;*** but that it is by a due subordination of what is little to what is great, and by the suppression of what is trivial and by the softening down of what is harsh in a gradual aerial perspective, and by a separation of what belongs to the essence of the life and character of an individual from what is transitory and accidental; in a word, by an harmonious adjustment and proportion of the several parts, according to their relative importance, that a true portrait is delineated. As a caution against popular error in this respect, the Letter to a Friend of Burns, by Mr. Words-

worth, which appears to have attracted but little attention[1] when it was first published, may be read with pleasure and advantage at the present time.

Three years after the publication of that Letter, Mr. Wordsworth was requested to aid in raising a monument to Burns. This gave him occasion to express his opinions on the erection of monuments to literary men, in a letter to a friend. This letter has never yet seen the light; and may fitly be inserted here. It will be remembered, that the observations which it contains concerning the injurious operations of the law of copyright in England are less applicable since the amendments introduced into that law through the exertions of Sir Egerton Brydges, Mr. Justice Talfourd, Lord Mahon, and other eminent literary men; and the general tenor of the letter in this respect, as in some others, may in some degree be modified accordingly.

'*Rydal Mount, April* 21, 1819.

'Sir,

'The letter with which you have honoured me, bearing date the 31st of March, I did not receive until yesterday; and, therefore, could not earlier express my regret that, notwithstanding a cordial approbation of the feeling which has prompted the undertaking, and a genuine sympathy in admiration with the gentlemen who have subscribed towards a Monument for Burns, I cannot unite my humble efforts with theirs in promoting this object.

'Sincerely can I affirm that my respect for the motives which have swayed these gentlemen has urged me to trouble you with a brief statement of the reasons of my dissent.

[1] Only 500 copies were printed.

'In the first place: Eminent poets appear to me to be a class of men, who less than any others stand in need of such marks of distinction; and hence I infer, that this mode of acknowledging their merits is one for which they would not, in general, be themselves solicitous. Burns did, indeed, erect a monument to Ferguson; but I apprehend his gratitude took this course because he felt that Ferguson had been prematurely cut off, and that his fame bore no proportion to his deserts. In neither of these particulars can the fate of Burns justly be said to resemble that of his predecessor: his years were indeed few, but numerous enough to allow him to spread his name far and wide, and to take permanent root in the affections of his countrymen; in short, he has raised for himself a monument so conspicuous, and of such imperishable materials, as to render a local fabric of stone superfluous, and, therefore, comparatively insignificant.

'But why, if this be granted, should not his fond admirers be permitted to indulge their feelings, and at the same time to embellish the metropolis of Scotland? If this may be justly objected to, and in my opinion it may, it is because the showy tributes to genius are apt to draw off attention from those efforts by which the interests of literature might be substantially promoted; and to exhaust public spirit in comparatively unprofitable exertions, when the wrongs of literary men are crying out for redress on all sides. It appears to me, that towards no class of his Majesty's subjects are the laws so unjust and oppressive. The attention of Parliament has lately been directed, by petition, to the exaction of copies of newly published works for certain libraries; but this is a trifling evil compared with the restrictions imposed upon the duration of copyright, which, in respect to works profound in philosophy, or elevated, abstracted, and refined in

imagination, is tantamount almost to an exclusion of the author from all pecuniary recompense; and, even where works of imagination and manners are so constituted as to be adapted to immediate demand, as is the case of those of Burns, justly may it be asked, what reason can be assigned that an author who dies young should have the prospect before him of his children being left to languish in poverty and dependence, while booksellers are revelling in luxury upon gains derived from works which are the delight of many nations.

'This subject might be carried much further, and we might ask, if the course of things insured immediate wealth, and accompanying rank and honours — honours and wealth often entailed on their families to men distinguished in the other learned professions, — why the laws should interfere to take away those pecuniary emoluments which are the natural inheritance of the posterity of authors, whose pursuits, if directed by genius and sustained by industry, yield in importance to none in which the members of a community can be engaged?

'But to recur to the proposal in your letter. I would readily assist, according to my means, in erecting a monument to the memory of the Poet Chatterton, who, with transcendent genius, was cut off while he was yet a boy in years; this, could he have anticipated the tribute, might have soothed his troubled spirit, as an expression of general belief in the existence of those powers which he was too impatient and too proud to develope.* At all events,

* [See the poem *'Resolution and Independence'* ('The Leech Gatherer'), stanza VII.

'I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride.'

Vol. II. p. 126. — H. R.]

it might prove an awful and a profitable warning. I should also be glad to see a monument erected on the banks of Loch Leven to the memory of the innocent and tender-hearted Michael Bruce, who after a short life, spent in poverty and obscurity, was called away too early to have left behind him more than a few trustworthy promises of pure affections, and unvitiated imagination.

'Let the gallant defenders of our country be liberally rewarded with monuments; their noble actions cannot speak for themselves, as the writings of men of genius are able to do. Gratitude in respect to them stands in need of admonition; and the very multitude of heroic competitors which increases the demand for this sentiment towards our naval and military defenders, considered as a body, is injurious to the claims of individuals. Let our great statesmen and eminent lawyers, our learned and eloquent divines, and they who have successfully devoted themselves to the abstruser sciences, be rewarded in like manner; but towards departed genius, exerted in the fine arts, and more especially in poetry, I humbly think, in the present state of things, the sense of our obligation to it may more satisfactorily be expressed by means pointing directly to the general benefit of literature.

'Trusting that these opinions of an individual will be candidly interpreted, I have the honour to be

'Your obedient servant,

'W. Wordsworth.'

The following letter, though written a quarter of a century later, may, from its subject, find a proper place here.

To J. Peace, Esq., City Library, Bristol.

'*Rydal Mount, April* 8, 1844.

'My dear Mr. Peace,

'You have gratified me by what you say of Sir Thomas Browne. I possess his *Religio Medici*, *Christian Morals*, *Vulgar Errors*, &c. in separate publications, and value him highly as a most original author. I almost regret that you did not add his Treatise upon *Urn Burial* to your publication; it is not long, and very remarkable for the vigour of mind that it displays.

'Have you had any communication with Mr. Cottle upon the subject of the subscription which he has set on foot for the erection of a *Monument* to Southey in Bristol Cathedral? We are all engaged in a like tribute to be placed in the parish church of Keswick. For my own part, I am not particularly fond of placing monuments in *churches*, at least in modern times. I should prefer their being put in public places in the town with which the party was connected by birth or otherwise; or in the country, if he were a person who lived apart from the bustle of the world. And in Southey's case, I should have liked better a bronze bust, in some accessible and not likely to be disturbed part of St. Vincent's Rocks, as a site, than the cathedral.

'Thanks for your congratulations upon my birthday. I have now entered, awful thought! upon my 75th year.

'God bless you, and believe me, my dear friend,

'Ever faithfully yours,

'Wm. Wordsworth.

'Mrs. Wordsworth begs her kind remembrance, as does Miss Fenwick, who is with us.'

[The following poem, alluded to in a previous note in this chapter, is taken from 'The Examiner' (London) to which it was communicated; and is introduced here, as having an interest in connection with the course of argument and feeling in Wordsworth's 'Letter to a Friend of Burns':

'THE AGE OF IRREVERENCE.

To ——,

You might have won the poet's name,
If such be worth the winning now,
And gained a laurel for your brow,
Of sounder leaf than I can claim.

But you have made the wiser choice;
A life that moves to gracious ends
Through troops of unrecording friends,
A deedful life, a silent voice:

And you have missed the irreverent doom
Of those that wear the poet's crown:
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the poet cannot die,
Nor leave his music as of old,
But round him ere he scarce be cold
Begins the scandal and the cry:

"Give out the faults he would not show!
Break lock and seal! betray the trust!
Keep nothing sacred: 't is but just
The many-headed beast should know."

Ah, shameless! for he did but sing
A song that pleased us from its worth;
No public life was his on earth,
No blazoned statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best:
His worst he kept, his best he gave.
My curse upon the clown and knave
Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it sweeter seem to be
The little life of bank and brier,
The bird that pipes his lone desire
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud
And drops at glory's temple-gates,
For whom the carrion vulture waits
To tear his heart before the crowd!

ALFRED TENNYSON.'

Wordsworth's estimation and hopes of the genius of Tennyson will be found expressed in a letter dated July 1, 1845, in chapter LIX. of this volume. — H. R.]

CHAPTER XXXIX.

PETER BELL. — THE WAGGONER. — SONNETS ON THE DUDDON.

In the year 1819 appeared the poem of 'Peter Bell'[1] dedicated to Mr. Southey. As has been already mentioned, it was written nearly twenty years before. The occasion of its composition has been also described. The nature of its reception is intimated in the Sonnet,[2]

'A book came forth of late called "Peter Bell."'

The Poet does not set his own claims very high, when he suggests that the censure which followed it was not more deserved than that which attended the publication with which it is paralleled, Milton's 'Apology for Divorce.'

However, this detraction does not appear to have been very injurious. It is somewhat remarkable that 'Peter Bell' was more in request than any of the author's previous publications.* An edition of 500 copies was printed

[1] Vol. ii. p. 220. [2] Vol. ii. p. 269.

* [See Vol. i. Chap. xii. of these 'Memoirs.' — Coleridge, in the account which he has given of his friend, Captain Sir Alexander Ball, says, 'The only poetical composition, of which I have ever heard him speak, was a manuscript poem ["*Peter Bell*"] written by one of my friends, which I read to his lady in his presence. To my surprise he afterwards spoke of this with warm interest; but it was evident to me, that it was not so much the poetic merit

in April, 1819, and a reimpression of it was required in the month of May in the same year. 'The Waggoner,'[1] published at the same time, was not so successful. This poem has a local interest, which endears it to the inhabitants of the Lake District, at the same time that others, who are unacquainted with that region, can hardly be expected to appreciate it in the same degree.*

Another poem, published about the same time, is connected with the same picturesque district, the 'Sonnets on the River Duddon,'[2] † which has its main source in the mountain range near the 'Three Shire Stones,' as they are called, where the three counties, Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancashire, meet. It flows to the south, through the Vale of Seathwaite, by Broughton, to the Duddon Sands, and into the Irish Sea.

This series of Sonnets is introduced by some very pleasing stanzas addressed to the author's brother, the

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of the composition that had interested him, as the truth and psychological insight with which it represented the practicability of reforming the most hardened minds, and the various accidents which may awaken the most brutalized person to a recognition of his nobler being.' 'The Friend,' Vol. III. p. 240, edit. 1837. The first edition of *'Peter Bell'* is illustrated with an engraving from a picture by Sir George Beaumont. — H. R.]

* [See Vol. I. Chap. XXIV. of these 'Memoirs,' and also Chap. LI., in this volume, and note at the end of the same chapter. — H. R.]

† [This publication was in 1820 with the title 'THE RIVER DUDDON, a series of Sonnets: VAUDRACOUR AND JULIA, and other Poems; to which is annexed a Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes, in the North of England. London, 1820.' This publication, with the 'Thanksgiving Ode,' 'Peter Bell,' and 'The Waggoner,' formed the third and last volume of the author's Miscellaneous Poems — in continuation with the two volumes published in 1815. — H. R.]

[1] Vol. ii. p. 68. [2] Vol. iii. p. 198.

Rev. Dr. Wordsworth, who was at that time rector of the large and populous parish of Lambeth; and to him these Sonnets, 'called forth by one of the most beautiful streams of his native country, are inscribed by his affectionate brother.' These prefatory stanzas open with a description of a Christmas night-scene at Rydal Mount, when the village minstrels played their serenade at the Poet's threshold, and welcomed by name every inmate of the house:

'The greeting given, the music played,
In honour of each household name
Duly pronounced with lusty call,
And "Merry Christmas!" wished to all.'

The effect of this appeal on those within the house is described with tenderness and pathos:

'The mutual nod, the grave disguise
Of hearts with gladness brimming o'er,
And some unbidden tears, that rise
For names once heard, — and heard no more!'

This rural scene is contrasted with the occupations of the busy city, in whose suburbs his brother dwelt, and with the cares of his arduous life:

'O Brother! I revere the choice
That took thee from thy native hills;
And it is given thee to rejoice,
Though public care full often tills
(Heaven only witness of the toil)
A barren and ungrateful soil.'

And he expresses a hope that his brother may derive refreshment, amid his parochial duties, from recollections of natural beauty and rural usages —

'If thee fond *Fancy* ever brought
From the proud margin of the Thames
And Lambeth's venerable towers,
To humbler streams and greener bowers;'

and that the poem, which displays, as it were, a series of landscapes drawn on the banks of the Duddon, may exercise a soothing and exhilarating influence on his brother's mind,

> 'While the imperial city's din
> Beats frequent on his satiate ear;'

an anticipation this, which was fully realized. Often did the rector of Lambeth resort for refreshment to the pages of the poet of Rydal. And though the occupations of the two brothers were very different; though their literary habits were very various, William being a reader of nature rather than books, and his brother being almost without a rival among his contemporaries for knowledge of books, particularly in theology and in some departments of history; and though their opportunities of personal intercourse were rare; yet by means of the Poet's writings they held frequent intellectual and spiritual converse together; and in one of his latest years, Dr. Wordsworth expressed his own appreciation of his brother's qualities by the following short note, written in pencil in a copy of the Poet's works: 'In diction, in nature, in grace, in truth, in variety, in purity, in philosophy, in morals, in piety, does he not surpass all our writers?'

To return to the Duddon. The author communicated the following reminiscences on this subject.[1]

The River Duddon.—'It is with the little River Duddon as it is with most other rivers, Ganges and Nile not excepted,—many springs might claim the honour of being its head. In my own fancy, I have fixed its rise near the noted Shire Stones placed at the meeting point of the counties Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Lancashire. They stand by the wayside, on the top of the Wry-nose

[1] MSS. I. F.

Pass, and it used to be reckoned a proud thing to say, that by touching them at the same time with feet and hands, one had been in three counties at once. At what point of its course the stream takes the name of Duddon, I do not know. I first became acquainted with the Duddon, as I have good reason to remember, in early boyhood. Upon the banks of the Derwent, I had learnt to be very fond of angling. Fish abound in that large river,—not so in the small streams in the neighbourhood of Hawkshead; and I fell into the common delusion, that the further from home the better sport would be had. Accordingly, one day I attached myself to a person living in the neighbourhood of Hawkshead, who was going to try his fortune, as an angler, near the source of the Duddon. We fished a great part of the day with very sorry success, the rain pouring torrents; and long before we got home, I was worn out with fatigue; and if the good man had not carried me on his back, I must have lain down under the best shelter I could find. Little did I think then it would have been my lot to celebrate, in a strain of love and admiration, the stream which for many years I never thought of without recollections of disappointment and distress.

'During my college vacation, and two or three years afterwards, before taking my bachelor's degree, I was several times resident in the house of a near relative, who lived in the small town of Broughton. I passed many delightful hours upon the banks of this river, which becomes an estuary about a mile from that place. The remembrances of that period are the subject of the 21st Sonnet. The subject of the 27th Sonnet is, in fact, taken from a tradition belonging to Rydal Hall, which once stood, as is believed, upon a pretty and woody hill on the right hand as you go from Rydal to Ambleside, and was

deserted, from the superstitious fear here described, and the present site fortunately chosen instead. The present Hall was erected by Sir Michael le Fleming, and it may be hoped that at some future time there will be an edifice more worthy of so beautiful a position. With regard to the 30th Sonnet, it is odd enough that this imagination was realized in the year 1840, when I made a tour through this district with my wife and daughter, Miss Fenwick and her niece, and Mr. and Miss Quillinan.

'I have many affecting remembrances connected with this stream. These I forbear to mention, especially things that occurred on its banks during the latter part of that visit to the sea-side, of which the former part is detailed in my Epistle to Sir George Beaumont.'

Mr. Wordsworth gave the following notices of his latter excursion to the banks of the Duddon, in a letter to Lady Frederick Bentinck.

'You will have wondered, dear Lady Frederick, what is become of me. I have been wandering about the country, and only returned yesterday. Our tour was by Keswick, Scale Hill, Buttermere, Loweswater, Ennerdale, Calder Abbey, Wastdale, Eskdale, the Vale of Duddon, Broughton, Furness Abbey, Peele Castle, Ulverston, &c.; we had broken weather, which kept us long upon the road, but we had also very fine intervals, and I often wished you had been present. We had such glorious sights! One, in particular, I never saw the like of. About sunset we were directly opposite that large, lofty precipice at Wastwater, which is called the Screes. The ridge of it is broken into sundry points, and along them, and partly along the side of the steep, went driving a procession of yellow vapoury clouds from the sea-quarter towards the mountain Scawfell. Their colours I have called yellow, but it was exquisitely varied, and the shapes of the rocks on the

summit of the ridge varied with the density or thinness of the vapours. The effect was most enchanting; for right above was steadfastly fixed a beautiful rainbow. We were a party of seven, Mrs. Wordsworth, my daughter, and Miss Fenwick included, and it would be difficult to say who was most delighted. The Abbey of Furness, as you well know, is a noble ruin, and most happily situated in a dell that entirely hides it from the surrounding country. It is taken excellent care of, and seems little dilapidated since I first knew it, more than half a century ago.'

CHAPTER XL.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT.

EARLY in the year 1822, Mr. Wordsworth published an octavo volume of Sonnets and other poems, suggested by a tour made in 1820, and entitled 'Memorials of a Tour on the Continent.'[1]

'I set out,' he says,[2] 'in company with my wife and sister, and Mr. and Mrs. Monkhouse, then just married, and Miss Horrocks. These two ladies, sisters, we left at Berne, while Mr. Monkhouse took the opportunity of making an excursion with us among the Alps, as far as Milan. Mr. H. C. Robinson joined us at Lucerne; and when this ramble was completed, we rejoined at Geneva the two ladies we had left at Berne, and proceeded to Paris, where Mr. Monkhouse and H. C. R. left us, and where we spent five weeks, of which there is not a record in these poems.'

Let me introduce here two letters addressed by Mr. Wordsworth to the Earl of Lonsdale, which will give a general outline of this tour.

To the Earl of Lonsdale.

'*Lucerne, Aug.* 19, 1820.

'My Lord,

'You did me the honour of expressing a wish to hear from me during my continental tour; accordingly, I have

[1] Vol. iii. p. 111–141.

[2] MSS. I. F.

great pleasure in writing from this place, where we arrived three days ago. Our route has lain through Brussels, Namur, along the banks of the Meuse, to Liege; thence to Aix-la-Chapelle, Cologne, and along the Rhine to Mayence, to Frankfort, Heidelberg (a noble situation, at the point where the Neckar issues from steep lofty hills into the plain of the Rhine,) Carlsruhe, and through the Black Forest to Schaffhausen; thence to Zurich, Bern, Thun, Interlachen. Here our Alpine tour might be said to commence, which has produced much pleasure thus far, and nothing that deserves the name of difficulty, even for the ladies. From the Valley of Lauterbrunnen we crossed the Weigern Alp to Grindelwald, and then over the grand Sheideck to Meyringen. This journey led us over high ground, and for fifteen leagues along the base of the loftiest Alps, which reared their bare or snow-clad ridges and pikes, in a clear atmosphere, with fleecy clouds now and then settling upon and gathering round them. We heard and saw several avalanches; they are announced by a sound like thunder, but more metallic and musical. This warning naturally makes one look about, and we had the gratification of seeing one falling, in the shape and appearance of a torrent or cascade of foaming water, down the deep worn crevices of the steep or perpendicular granite mountains. Nothing can be more awful than the sound of these cataracts of ice and snow thus descending, unless it be the silence which succeeds. The elevations from which we beheld these operations of nature, and saw such an immense range of primitive mountains stretching to the east and west, were covered with rich pasturage and beautiful flowers, among which was abundance of the monkshood, a flower which I had never seen but in the trim borders of our gardens, and which here grew not so much in patches as in little woods or forests, towering

above the other plants. At this season the herdsmen are with their cattle in still higher regions than those which we have trod, the herbage where we travelled being reserved till they descend in the autumn. We have visited the Abbey of Engelberg, not many leagues from the borders of the Lake of Lucerne. The tradition is, that the site of the abbey was appointed by angels, singing from a lofty mountain that rises from the plain of the valley, and which, from having been thus honoured, is called Engelberg, or the Hill of the Angels. It is a glorious position for such beings, and I should have thought myself repaid for the trouble of so long a journey by the impression made upon my mind, when I first came in view of the vale in which the convent is placed, and of the mountains that enclose it. The light of the sun had left the valley, and the deep shadows spread over it heightened the splendour of the evening light, and spread upon the surrounding mountains, some of which had their summits covered with pure snow; others were half hidden by vapours rolling round them; and the Rock of Engelberg could not have been seen under more fortunate circumstances, for masses of cloud glowing with the reflection of the rays of the setting sun were hovering round it, like choirs of spirits preparing to settle upon its venerable head.

'To-day we quit this place to ascend the mountain Righi. We shall be detained in this neighbourhood till our passports are returned from Berne, signed by the Austrian minister, which we find absolutely necessary to enable us to proceed into the *Milanese*. At the end of five weeks at the latest, we hope to reach Geneva, returning by the Simplon Pass. There I might have the pleasure of hearing from your Lordship; and may I beg that you would not omit to mention our Westmoreland politics.

The diet of Switzerland is now sitting in this place. Yesterday I had a long conversation with the Bavarian envoy, whose views of the state of Europe appear to me very just. This letter must unavoidably prove dull to your Lordship, but when I have the pleasure of seeing you, I hope to make some little amends, though I feel this is a very superficial way of viewing a country, even with reference merely to the beauties of nature. We have not met with many English; there is scarcely a third part as many in the country as there was last year. A brother of Lord Grey is in the house where we now are, and Lord Ashburton left yesterday. I must conclude abruptly, with kindest remembrances to Lady Lonsdale and Lady Mary. Believe me, my Lord, most faithfully

'Your Lordship's

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

'Paris, Oct. 7, [1820], *45, Rue Charlot, Boulevards du Temple.*

'My Lord,

'I had the honour of writing to your Lordship from Lucerne, 19th of August, giving an account of our movements. We have visited, since, those parts of Switzerland usually deemed most worthy of notice, and the Italian lakes, having stopped four days at Milan, and as many at Geneva. With the exception of a couple of days on the Lake of Geneva, the weather has been most favourable, though frequently during the last fortnight extremely cold. We have had no detention from illness, nor any bad accident, for which we feel more grateful, on account of some of our fellow-travellers, who accidentally joined us for a few days. Of these, one, an American gentleman,* was drowned in the Lake of Zurich, by the

* [Frederick William Goddard, of Boston. See *'Elegiac Stanzas'* in the 'Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1820,' Vol.

upsetting of a boat in a storm, two or three days after he parted with us; and two others, near the summit of Mount Jura, and in the middle of a tempestuous night, were precipitated, they scarcely knew how far, along with one of those frightful and ponderous vehicles, a continental diligence. We have been in Paris since Sunday last, and think of staying about a fortnight longer, as scarcely less will suffice for even a hasty view of the town and neighbourhood. We took Fontainebleau in our way, and intend giving a day to Versailles. The day we entered Paris we passed a well-drest young man and woman, dragging a harrow through a field, like cattle; nevertheless, working in the fields on the sabbath day does not appear to be general in France. On the same day a wretched looking person begged of us, as the carriage was climbing a hill. Nothing could exceed his transport in receiving a pair of old pantaloons which were handed out of the carriage. This poor mendicant, the postilion told us, was an *ancien Curé*. The churches seem generally falling into decay in the country. We passed one which had been recently repaired. I have noticed, however, several young persons, men as well as women, earnestly employed in their devotions, in different churches, both in Paris and elsewhere. Nothing which I have seen in this city has interested me at all like the Jardin des Plantes, with the living animals, and the Museum of Natural History which it includes. Scarcely could I refrain from tears of admiration at the sight of this apparently boundless exhibition of the wonders of the creation. The statues and pictures of the Louvre affect me feebly in comparison. The exterior of

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iii. p. 143, for some further particulars given by Wordsworth respecting his travelling companionship with the young American, and the lament over his untimely death. — H. R.]

Paris is much changed since I last visited it in 1792. I miss many ancient buildings, particularly the Temple, where the poor king and his family were so long confined. That memorable spot, where the Jacobin Club was held, has also disappeared. Nor are the additional buildings always improvements; the Pont des Arts, in particular, injures the view from the Pont Neuf greatly; but in these things public convenience is the main point.

'I say nothing of public affairs, for I have little opportunity of knowing anything about them. In respect to the business of our Queen, we deem ourselves truly fortunate in having been out of the country at a time when an inquiry, at which all Europe seems scandalized, was going on.

'I have purposely deferred congratulating your Lordship on the marriage of Lady Mary with Lord Frederick Bentinck, which I hear has been celebrated. My wishes for her happiness are most earnest.

'With respectful compliments and congratulations to Lady Lonsdale, in which Mrs. Wordsworth begs leave to join,

'I have the honour to be,
'My Lord,
'Your Lordship's
obliged and faithful friend and servant,
'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

It is not my intention to insert a detailed narrative of this tour. The ground which the travellers traversed is the high road of Europe, and the Poet's 'Memorials' record what struck him most: *they* are his Journal, published by himself.

Suffice it to say, that the travellers left Dover for CALAIS on July 11th, 1820. The principal places visited

in their route were as follows, as recorded by two Journals kept by two of the party.

Gravelines, Dunkirk, July 13. Furnes, Ghistelle, BRUGES (I mark with CAPITALS those places which called forth poetical effusions).

> 'Bruges I saw attired with golden light
> Streamed from the west.'

The venerable churches and other eccleciastical buildings; and the 'forms of nun-like females with soft motion gliding' through their long avenues; and the general aspect of the place, solemn as 'if the streets were consecrated ground,' and 'the city one vast temple,' enchanted the tourists. Thence they proceeded to Ghent, July 15. Here, says the journalist, William ended his observations 'with a view from the top of the cathedral,' his usual practice when possible.

From Brussels they visited the field of WATERLOO, and thence to NAMUR, July 18. On this part of the tour, Mr. Wordsworth thus speaks — *Sonnet V. Between Namur and Liege.* 'The scenery on the Meuse pleases me more, upon the whole, than that of the Rhine, though the river itself is much inferior in grandeur. The rocks, both in form and colour, especially between Namur and Huy, surpass any upon the Rhine, though they are in several places disfigured by quarries, whence stones were taken for the new fortifications. This is much to be regretted, for they are useless, and the scars will remain, perhaps, for thousands of years. A like injury to a still greater degree has been inflicted, in my memory, upon the beautiful rocks at Clifton, on the banks of the Avon. There is probably in existence a very long letter of mine to Sir Uvedale Price, in which was given a description of

the landscapes on the Meuse as compared with those on the Rhine.'[1]

LIEGE, AIX-LA-CHAPELLE, Juliers, Bergheim, COLOGNE, July 20. Hence they proceeded in a 'carriage on the banks of the Rhine,'[2] to Bonn, Andernach, Coblentz, July 22. Ehrenbreitstein, Boppard, St. Goar, Bingen, July 25. Mayence, Wiesbaden, Frankfort, Darmstadt, HEIDELBERG, and its RAPIDS, Carlsruhe, Baden-Baden, Offenberg, Haslach, the SOURCE of the DANUBE, Blomberg, SCHAFFHAUSEN, Aug. 1. Zurich, Lenzberg, Murgenthal, Baden, Bern, Thun, MONUMENT to ALOYS REDING, Interlachen, Aug. 8. STAUBBACH, LAUTERBRUNNEN, Grindelwald, Meyringen, FALLS of the AAR, Handeck, Lake of BRIENTZ, back to Meyringen, Sarnen, ENGELBERG, Stanz, Lucerne; long covered bridge; model of Alpine country. Here they were met by Mr. H. C. Robinson, Aug. 16. Ascend the RIGHI, Aug. 19, with Mr. F. W. GODDARD; 'Our Lady of the Snow.' Goldau, Sieven, SCHWYTZ, Fluelan, Head of Uri, ALTORF, Amstag, Wasen, Hospice on ST. GOTHARD, 'Ranz des Vaches,' Airolo, Aug. 25. Bellinzona, Aug. 26. Locarno, Lugano, 'Church of San-Salvador,' Cadenabbia, Bellaggio, Aug. 30. The lines suggested by this church,[3] and those 'composed in one of the Roman Catholic cantons'[4] of Switzerland,[5] supply wise and charitable admonitions to the tourist, and may enable him to elicit spiritual gratification and con-

[1] Inquiry has been made for this letter, but, as yet, without success.

[2] Vol. ii. p. 115.

[3] Vol. ii. p. 127.

[4] In the first edition these two poems stood as one: the reader will easily perceive the reason of the severance.

[5] Vol. ii. p. 119.

solation from objects which are fraught with edification to the wayfarer who contemplates them aright.

'Hail to the firm unmoving cross,
Aloft, where pines their branches toss!
And to the chapel far withdrawn,
That lurks by lonely ways.

'Where'er we roam — along the brink
Of Rhine, or by the sweeping Po,
Through Alpine vale, or champaign wide,
Whate'er we look on, at our side
Be CHARITY, to bid us think
And feel, if we would know.'

Another admonition is offered in this poem. Although the country through which the traveller passed be *not* consecrated by any outward emblems of religion, yet, says the poet, let the natural objects which he sees be contemplated with an inward sense of devotion:

'Cliffs, fountains, rivers, seasons, times,
Let all remind the soul of heaven;
Our slack devotion needs them all;
And Faith — so oft of sense the thrall,
While she by help of Nature climbs,
May hope to be forgiven.'

Their course next lay towards COMO. The tourists proceeded to Milan, FORT FUENTES, Lugano, Luvino, Baveno, Lago Maggiore, Aug. 27. Duomo d'Ossola, SIMPLON, Brieg, GEMMI, Sion, Martigny, by the Col de Baume to Chamouny, Sept. 17. Trientz, Martigny, Villeneuve, Sept. 19. Vevay, Lausanne, Sept. 21. Geneva, Dijon, Fontainebleau, Oct. 1, and so to Paris where the travellers arrived Oct. 1. They remained at Paris till Oct. 28.

On Nov. 2 they embarked from BOULOGNE, in a small vessel, in bad weather, the wind contrary. To quote the

words of one of the Journals, 'A merciful Providence saved us from great danger: the vessel struck upon a sand-bank, was then driven with violence on a rocky road in the harbour, where she was battered for a considerable time; but the tide was fast ebbing, and blessed be God for our preservation.'

On the 7th they arrived safely at Dover; on the 9th they were in London. Here they remained for the pleasure of seeing Mr. Rogers, Charles Lamb and his sister, the Lloyds, Mr. R. Sharp, Mr. Kenyon, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Talfourd, and others.

On the 17th and 18th they were with their dear friends at Hampstead Heath,[1] whence Wordsworth walked to visit Coleridge on the 18th.

On the 23d, Wordsworth, his wife and sister, left London for Cambridge, to visit his brother, Dr. Wordsworth, who had been promoted from the rectory of Lambeth to the mastership of Trinity College, in the summer of 1820. They remained his guests till the 6th December, and then proceeded to visit Sir George and Lady Beaumont at Coleorton, where they remained till the 20th; and on Christmas Eve they arrived at Rydal Mount.

In the words of one of the journalists: 'On Thursday, 24th Dec., we had the happiness to reach our own home, finding our beloved sister (Sarah Hutchinson,) daughter, dear Edith Southey, and all our good friends and neighbours well, and rejoiced to see us.'

[1] Mr., Mrs., and Miss Hoare.

CHAPTER XLI.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS. — RYDAL CHAPEL.

It has been mentioned in the last chapter that after his return from the Continent in 1820, Wordsworth spent a few days with his friends Sir George and Lady Beaumont at Coleorton. Sir George was then about to build a new church on his estate. The erection of a new church by a country gentleman on his property was not so common an event in those days as it has now become. This design furnished the occasion for conversations on Church History, and, together with another circumstance specified in the preface to those poems, led to the composition of a series of 'Ecclesiastical Sonnets,' or 'Ecclesiastical *Sketches*,' as they were originally entitled.

Ecclesiastical Sonnets.—'My purpose,' said Mr. Wordsworth,[1] 'in writing this series was, as much as possible, to confine my view to the introduction, progress and operation of the CHURCH in ENGLAND, both previous and subsequent to the reformation. The Sonnets were written long before Ecclesiastical History and points of doctrine had excited the interest with which they have been recently investigated and discussed. The former particular is mentioned as an excuse for my having fallen into error in respect to an incident which had been selected as setting forth the height to which the power

[1] MSS. I. F.

of the Popedom over temporal sovereignty had attained, and the arrogancy with which it was displayed. I allude to the last sonnet but one in the first series, where Pope Alexander the Third, at Venice, is described as setting his foot on the neck of the Emperor Barbarossa. Though this is related as a fact in history, I am told it is a mere legend of no authority.[1] Substitute for it an undeniable truth, not less fitted for my purpose, namely, the penance inflicted by Gregory the Seventh upon the Emperor Henry the Fourth, at Canosa.

'Before I conclude my notice of these Sonnets, let me observe that the opinion I pronounced in favour of Laud (long before the Oxford Tract movement), and which had brought censure upon me from several quarters, is not in the least changed. Omitting here to examine into his conduct in respect to the persecuting spirit with which he has been charged, I am persuaded that most of his aims to restore spiritual practices which had been abandoned, were good and wise, whatever errors he might commit in the manner he sometimes attempted to enforce them. I firmly believe, that had not he, and others who shared his opinions and felt as he did, stood up in opposition to the reformers of that period, it is questionable whether the Church would ever have recovered its lost ground, and become the blessing it now is, and will, I trust, become in a still greater degree, both to those of its communion, and those who unfortunately are separated from it.'

I saw the figure of a lovely maid: Sonnet I. Part III. —'When I came to this part of the series I had the dream

[1] According to Baronius, the humiliation of the Emperor was a voluntary act of prostration on his part. .Ann. Eccl. ad Ann. 1177.

described in this sonnet. The figure was that of my daughter, and the whole passed exactly as here represented. The sonnet was composed on the middle road leading from Grasmere to Ambleside: it was begun as I left the last house in the vale, and finished, word for word as it now stands, before I came in view of Rydal. I wish I could say the same of the five or six hundred I have written: most of them were frequently retouched in the course of composition, and not a few laboriously.

'I have only further to observe, that the intended church which prompted these Sonnets was erected on Coleorton Moor, towards the centre of a very populous parish, between three and four miles from Ashby-de-la-Zouch, on the road to Loughborough, and has proved, I believe, a great benefit to the neighbourhood.'

Such were the words of the author in reference to these Sonnets. Let me add, that some alterations and additions have been made in the series since their first publication. Of these changes I will record one, because, though it concerns a single *word*, yet it involves an important principle. In reading these Sonnets, and also in perusing the work of the author's friend referred to in the Preface, Mr. Southey's 'Book of the Church,' the student of Ecclesiastical History will probably be of opinion that it might have been better if, — however imperfect some of the instruments employed might be, — the English Reformation had been there represented more clearly and fully on the whole as a work of religious *Restoration*.

In Sonnet xxx. p. 73, of the *first* edition of the 'Ecclesiastical Sketches,' speaking of the 'Reformers,' the author says,

> 'With what entire affection did they prize
> Their *new-born* Church!'[1]

[1] Vol. iv. p. 96.

The invidious inferences that would be drawn from this epithet by the enemies of the English Church and Reformation are too obvious to be dilated on. The author was aware of this, and in reply to a friend who called his attention to the misconstruction and perversion to which the passage was liable, he replied as follows:

'*Nov.* 12, 1846.

'My dear C——,

'The passage which you have been so kind as to comment upon in one of the "Ecclesiastical Sonnets," was altered several years ago by my pen, in a copy of my poems which I possess, but the correction was not printed till a place was given it in the last edition, printed last year, in one volume. It there stands,

"Their church reformed."

Though for my own part, as I mentioned some time since in a letter I had occasion to write to the Bishop of ——, I do not like the term *reformed*; if taken in its literal sense, as a *transformation*, it is very objectionable.*

. . . . . .

'Yours affectionately,

'W. WORDSWORTH.'

The main *additions* in the later edition of the 'Ecclesiastical Sketches' will be found in the Sonnets on the Offices of the English Liturgy, and on the Aspect of

* [See also in the '*Postscript*' to the volume entitled 'Yarrow Revisited, etc.' his remarks on fallacies arising from false uses of the term '*Reform*.' He there remarks — 'The great religious Reformation in the sixteenth century did not profess to be a new construction, but a restoration of something fallen into decay, or put out of sight.' Vol. v. p. 266. — H. R.]

Christianity in America.[1] The subjects of these last, for the most part, were suggested to the author by an eloquent, learned, and zealous American prelate, Bishop Doane, and by another of his most valued American friends, Professor Henry Reed, of Philadelphia: a fortunate suggestion. The muse of Wordsworth could not be more appropriately employed than in strengthening the bonds of amity subsisting between England and America by means of spiritual sympathies.[2]

[1] Vol. iv. p. 106.

[2] The Sonnet addressed to the Pennsylvanians (vol. iv. p. 261), is of a different tone. But happily the language of expostulation in which that Sonnet is written is no longer applicable. It will be gratifying to Americans and Englishmen (indignos fraternum rumpere fœdus) to read the following particulars communicated in a letter from Mr. Reed, dated October 28, 1850. 'In Mr. Wordsworth's letters to me you will have observed that a good deal is said on the Pennsylvania Loans, a subject in which, as you are aware, he was interested for his friends rather than for himself. Last December, when I learned that a new edition of his poems was in press, I wrote to him (it was my last letter) to say frankly that his Sonnet "To Pennsylvanians" was no longer just, and to desire him not to let it stand so for after-time. It was very gratifying to me on receiving a copy of the new edition, which was not till after his death, to find the "*additional note*" at the end of the fifth volume, showing by its being printed on the unusual place of a fly-leaf, that he had been anxious to attend to such a request. It was characteristic of that righteousness which distinguished him as an author; and it has this interest (as I conjecture) that it was probably the last sentence he composed for the press. It is chiefly on this account that I mention it to you.' [The 'ADDITIONAL NOTE' here referred to is as follows:

'Vol. iv. Pages 261 and 292.

"*Men of the Western World.*"

'I am happy to add that this anticipation is already partly realized; and that the reproach addressed to the Pennsylvanians in

Connected with the 'Ecclesiastical Sonnets,' as written soon after them in 1823, and as indicating some of the author's feelings on ecclesiastical affairs, are the two poems[1] addressed to Lady le Fleming on the preparations made for the erection, at her sole expense, of the CHAPEL at RYDAL, which was consecrated by Bishop Blomfield (then Bishop of Chester) in 1825, and which was frequented by Mr. Wordsworth and his family for a quarter of a century.

Concerning these poems, and the chapel which suggested them, Mr. Wordsworth made the following remarks:[2]

To the Lady le Fleming. — 'After thanking, in prose, Lady Fleming for the service she has done to her neighbourhood by erecting this chapel, I have nothing to say beyond the expression of regret that the architect did not furnish an elevation better suited to the site in a narrow mountain-pass, and, what is more of consequence, better constructed in the interior for the purposes of worship. It has no chancel; the altar is unbecomingly confined; the pews are so narrow as to preclude the possibility of kneel-

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the next sonnet, is no longer applicable to them. I trust that those other states to which it may yet apply, will soon follow the example now set them in Philadelphia, and redeem their credit with the world. — 1850.'

This note appears on a fly-leaf at the end of Vol. v. of the edition of 1849-50.

It is not so much to gratify a personal feeling, as to show the readiness with which Mr. Wordsworth received a suggestion, that I mention here that it was also in consequence of the recommendation of an American friend, that he turned his mind to the completion of the Sonnets upon the Liturgical services. See in Chap. LVII. his letter to H. R., dated Sept. 4, 1842. — H. R.]

[1] Vol. v. pp. 25, 29.

[2] MSS. I. F.

ing; there is no vestry; and, what ought to have been first mentioned, the font, instead of standing at its proper place at the entrance, is thrust into the further end of a little pew. When these defects shall have been pointed out to the munificent patroness, they will, it is hoped, be corrected.'

Mr. Wordsworth attended Rydal Chapel for the last time on Sunday morning, March the 10th 1850. His seat and the seats of his family are those which are nearest to the pulpit. The lines addressed to Lady le Fleming breathe a holy spirit of Christian piety and charity, and may serve, for many generations, to impart additional interest and fervour to the religious services of those who assemble together for public worship in that modest house of prayer.

CHAPTER XLII.

TOUR IN HOLLAND, ETC. 1823. — TOUR IN NORTH WALES, 1824. — TOUR ON THE RHINE, 1828.

In May and June, 1823, Wordsworth and his wife made a short tour in Belgium and Holland. He was then suffering acutely from a disorder in his eyes, and was in great need of relaxation. They spent some time very agreeably with their friend and future son-in-law, Mr. Quillinan, at Lee Priory, Kent, which they quitted on the 16th of May for Dover. 'How strange,' he notes, 'that the description of Dover Cliff, in "King Lear," should ever have been supposed to have been meant for a reality! I know nothing that more forcibly shows the little reflection with which even men of sense read poetry. The cliff cannot be more than 400 feet high; and yet, "how truly," exclaims the historian of Dover, "has Shakspeare, described the precipice'!" How much better would the historian have done, had he given us its actual elevation!'

The route of the travellers was to Ostend, thence to Bruges, 'where,' says the journalist, 'we ate rather a melancholy repast; the inflammation in W.'s eyes was so much aggravated by the heat and sad heart amid a boisterous company at the table d'hôte. But, not to dwell upon grievances, Bruges loses none of its attractions upon a second visit.' They went by the barge to Ghent; 'a charming conveyance, which seems to promise restoration

to our hopes, W. is so much better. Nothing can be more refreshing than to float thus at ease, the awning screening us from the sun, and the pleasant breeze fanning our temples.'

From Ghent they proceeded by diligence to Antwerp. 'We there feasted our eyes upon those magnificent pictures by Rubens in the Cathedral over and over again; and often was this great pleasure heightened almost to rapture, when the full organ swelled and penetrated the remotest corners of that stately edifice; here we were never weary of lingering.'

It is worthy of remark, and the remark has been suggested by the companion of his journey, that the Poet's eyes, which were in a very irritable state when he left England, appear to have been much benefited by looking at pictures. These interested his mind; and his mind being engaged in contemplating beautiful objects, and being refreshed by them, no longer brooded on his physical infirmity, which had inspired him with gloomy forebodings; and so the ailment itself, which had been aggravated by the mental reaction upon it, gradually subsided, and at length vanished.

On the 24th of May they left Antwerp by diligence for Breda, which looked well by moonlight, and reached Dort at half-past six, A. M., where they ascended the church-tower to enjoy the extensive view, and thence proceeded to Rotterdam.

'The fine statue of Erasmus, rising silently with eyes fixed upon his book above the noisy crowd gathered round the booths and vehicles which upon the market-day beset him, and backed by buildings and trees intermingled with the fluttering pennons from vessels unlading their several cargoes into the warehouses, produces a very striking contrast.'

From Rotterdam they went in a barge to the pretty town of Delf; passed the spire of Ryswick on the left, and so by water to the Hague. 'Immediately after tea we walked to the wood in which stands the palace — charming promenades, pools of water, swans, stately trees, birds warbling, military music. The streets of the Hague similar to those at Delf. Screens of trees, sometimes on one side, generally on both sides of the canal. Bridges at convenient distances across. . . . . Looked with interest on the spot where the De Witts were massacred. . . . Horse-chestnut trees in flower everywhere. Thence to Leyden and Haarlem, where 'we mount the tower of the cathedral: a splendid and interesting view beyond any we have seen. Looking eastward, the canal stretching through houses and among the trees, to the spires of Amsterdam in the distance. A little to the right, the Mere of Haarlem spotted with vessels; the river winding among the streets through the town. Steeple towers of Utrecht beyond the Mere. The Boss, a fine wood and elegant mansion, now a royal residence. Neukirk, fine tower. The sea and sand-hills beyond the flats, glowing under a dazzling western sky. The winding Spar, again among green fields, brings the eye round to the Amsterdam canal, along which we shall glide.'

On the 31st of May '' we set out at nine, A. M. for Amsterdam in a *schipper* to peep into North Holland. Pass dwellings of reeds loosely put together like ill-made stacks of straw. Disembark at the village of Bucksloot; proceed, with a guide, on foot to Brock. After walking an hour by side of the canal on a good road through a tract of peat-mossy, rich pasturage, besprinkled with cattle, and bounded by a horizon broken by spires, steeple-towers, villages, scattered farms, and the unfailing windmill seen single, or in pairs, or clustered, — we are

now seated beneath the shelter of a friendly windmill, the north wind bracing us, and the swallows twittering under a cloudless grey sky over our heads.

'At some little distance the canal spreads into a circular basin, upon the opposite margin of which stands the quaintly drest little town of Brock; the church spire rises from amid elegantly neat houses, chiefly of wood, much carved and ornamented, and covered with glazed tiles: a most curious place. In each of these houses is a certain elaborately adorned door, by which at their weddings the newly married pair enter; it is then closed, and never opened again till the man or his wife is carried out a corpse. The streets are paved with tiles, of various colours, in patterns. The beds of the gardens quaintly shaped with perfect uniformity: pæonies, wall-flowers, and rich stocks were the prevailing flowers. One garden, which we visited, was composed of box-trees cut into divers shapes of birds, quadrupeds, a mermaid, towers, a ladder, &c. Went into the church — a mirror of cleanliness: the name of each person on his brightly rubbed chair, to which appertained the footstool with an earthen pot containing ashes.'

On June 1st they had a second delightful excursion to Sardan, another North Holland town, where they 'visited the hut and workshop in which Peter the Great had wrought as a carpenter.' 'A charming little town, seated more than half round a circular bay, like Brock, but upon a much larger scale; and though one of its inhabitants characterized Brock very aptly as "a little cabinet," we were even more pleased with Sardan. . . . Returned to Amsterdam, where,' says the journalist, 'I would not live to be queen of Holland; yet she is mistress of the most magnificent palace I ever saw.'

From Amsterdam the travellers returned by Utrecht and

Breda to Antwerp, and by Brussels, Bruges, Calais to Dover, where they landed on the 11th of June, returning to Lee Priory for some days. 'Adventures,' concludes the Journal, 'we have had none. W.'s eyes being so much disordered, made him shun society, and the same cause crippled us in many respects, but we have stored up thoughts and images that will not die.'

Wordsworth had now the satisfaction of finding that his poetical reputation was gradually rising without any influences besides those of its own inherent merits. On the contrary, with many powerful prejudices and parties arrayed against it, his poetry was making slow but sure progress. Southey writes thus, at this time, to an American friend, the historian of Spanish literature, George Ticknor, Esq.:

To George Ticknor, Esq.[1]

'*Keswick, July* 16, 1823.

'Coleridge talks of bringing out his work upon logic, of collecting his poems, and of adapting his translation of Wallenstein for the stage, Kean having taken a fancy to exhibit himself in it. Wordsworth is just returned from a trip to the Netherlands: he loves rambling, and has no pursuits which require him to be stationary. I shall probably see him in a few days. Every year shows more and more, how strongly his poetry has leavened the rising generation.* Your mocking-bird is said to improve the strain which he imitates; this is not the case with ours.'

[1] From Southey's Life and Correspondence, vol. v. p. 142.

* [And Allston, writing from America a few years earlier, says, 'Perhaps it may be gratifying to Mr. Wordsworth to know that he has a great many warm admirers on this side of the Atlantic,

At the end of the summer of the following year, 1824, Wordsworth made a short excursion in North Wales, of which the following sketch is given in a letter to Sir George Beaumont.

'*Hindwell, Radnor, Sept.* 20, 1824.

'My dear Sir George,

'After a three weeks' ramble in North Wales, Mrs. Wordsworth, Dora, and myself are set down quietly here for three weeks more. The weather has been delightful, and everything to our wishes. On a beautiful day we took the steam-packet at Liverpool, passed the mouth of the Dee, coasted the extremity of the Vale of Clwyd, sailed close under Great Orm's Head, had a noble prospect of Penmaenmawr, and having almost touched upon Puffin's Island, we reached Bangor Ferry, a little after six in the afternoon. We admired the stupendous preparations for the bridge over the Menai; and breakfasted next morning at Carnarvon. We employed several hours in exploring the interior of the noble castle, and looking at it from different points of view in the neighbourhood. At half-past four we departed for Llanberris, having fine views as we looked back of C. Castle, the sea, and Anglesey. A little before sunset we came in sight of Llanberris Lake, Snowdon, and all the craggy hills and mountains surrounding it; the foreground a beautiful contrast to this grandeur and desolation — a green sloping hollow, furnishing a shelter for one of the most beautiful collections of lowly

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in spite of the sneers of the *Edinburgh Review*, which, with the *Quarterly*, is reprinted and as much read here as in England. There is still taste enough amongst us to appreciate his merits.' Letter to William Collins, R. A., dated 'Boston, 16th April, 1819.' 'The Life of Collins,' Vol. I. p. 141. — H. R.]

Welsh cottages, with thatched roofs, overgrown with plants, anywhere to be met with: the hamlet is called Cum-y-glo. And here we took boat, while the solemn lights of evening were receding towards the tops of the mountains. As we advanced, Dolbardin Castle came in view, and Snowdon opened upon our admiration. It was almost dark when we reached the quiet and comfortable inn at Llanberris.

. . . . . .

'There being no carriage-road, we undertook to walk by the Pass of Llanberris, eight miles, to Capel Cerig; this proved fatiguing, but it was the only oppressive exertion we made during the course of our tour. We arrived at Capel Cerig in time for a glance at the Snowdonian range, from the garden of the inn, in connection with the lake (or rather pool) reflecting the crimson clouds of evening. The outline of Snowdon is perhaps seen nowhere to more advantage than from this place. Next morning, five miles down a beautiful valley to the banks of the Conway, which stream we followed to Llanrwst; but the day was so hot that we could only make use of the morning and evening. Here we were joined, according to previous arrangement, by Bishop Hobart,* of New York, who remained with us till two o'clock next day, and left us to complete his hasty tour through North and South

* [Bishop Hobart had, a few weeks before, made a visit, which he thus speaks of in a letter dated August 29, 1824 — 'I passed the whole of yesterday with Mr. Wordsworth, one of the celebrated Lake Poets, at his seat at Rydal Water, and have not enjoyed a more delightful day since I left home. He was highly interesting in his conversation, simple and affable in his manners; and both he and his family were kind and attentive to me in the highest degree.' The Rev. Dr. Schroeder's 'Memorial of Bishop Hobart,' p. 87. — H. R.]

Wales. In the afternoon arrived my old college friend and youthful companion among the Alps, the Rev. R. Jones, and in his car we all proceeded to the falls of the Conway, thence up that river to a newly erected inn on the Irish road, where we lodged; having passed through bold and rocky scenery along the banks of a stream which is a feeder of the Dee. Next morning we turned from the Irish road three or four miles to visit the "Valley of Meditation" (Glyn Mavyr), where Mr. Jones has, at present, a curacy, with a comfortable parsonage. We slept at Corwen, and went down the Dee to Llangollen, which you and dear Lady B. know well. Called upon the celebrated Recluses,[1] * who hoped that you and Lady B. had not forgotten them; they certainly had not forgotten you, and they begged us to say that they retained a lively remembrance of you both. We drank tea and passed a couple of hours with them in the evening, having visited the aqueduct over the Dee and Chirk Castle in the afternoon. Lady E. has not been well, and has suffered much in her eyes, but she is surprisingly lively for her years. Miss P. is apparently in unimpaired health. Next day I sent them the following sonnet from Ruthin, which was conceived, and in a great measure composed, in their grounds.

"A stream, to mingle with your favourite Dee,
Along the *Vale of Meditation* flows;[2]
So named by those fierce Britons, pleased to see
In Nature's face the expression of repose,'
&c. &c.

[1] The Lady E. Butler, and the Hon. Miss Ponsonby.
[2] Works, vol. ii. p. 301.

* [See Sir Walter Scott's account of his visit to these Ladies in the following year; Lockhart's 'Life of Scott,' Chap. LXIII. Vol. VIII. p. 47. — H. B.]

. . . . . .

'We passed three days with Mr. J.'s[1] friends in the vale of Clwyd, looking about us, and on the Tuesday set off again, accompanied by our friend, to complete our tour. We dined at Conway, walked to Bennarth, the view from which is a good deal choked up with wood. A small part of the castle has been demolished for the sake of the new road to communicate with the suspension bridge, which they are about to make to the small island opposite the castle, to be connected by a long embankment with the opposite shore. The bridge will, I think, prove rather ornamental when time has taken off the newness of its supporting masonry; but the mound deplorably impairs the majesty of the water at high tide; in fact it destroys its lake-like appearance. Our drive to Aber in the

[1] On this, one of the last occasions, on which Mr. Jones's name will be referred to, it is due to his memory to insert the following tribute from Mr. Wordsworth's pen.* 'This excellent person, one of my earliest and dearest friends, died in the year 1835. We were undergraduates together of the same year, at the same college; and companions in many a delightful ramble through his own romantic country of North Wales. Much of the latter part of his life he passed in comparative solitude; which I know was often cheered by remembrance of our youthful adventures, and of the beautiful regions which, at home and abroad, we had visited together. Our long friendship was never subject to a moment's interruption; and while revising these volumes for the last time, I have been so often reminded of my loss, with a not unpleasing sadness, that I trust the reader will excuse this passing mention of a man who well deserves from me something more than so brief a notice. Let me only add, that during the middle part of his life he resided many years (as incumbent of the living) at a parsonage in Oxfordshire, which is the subject of the 7th of the 'Miscellaneous Sonnets,' Part 3.

* Vol. iii. p. 240.

evening was charming; sun setting in glory. We had also a delightful walk next morning up the vale of Aber, terminated by a lofty waterfall; not much in itself, but most striking as a closing accompaniment to the secluded valley. Here, in the early morning, I saw an odd sight—fifteen milk-maids together, laden with their brimming pails. How cheerful and happy they appeared! and not a little inclined to joke after the manner of the pastoral persons in Theocritus. That day brought us to Capel Cerig again, after a charming drive up the banks of the Ogwen, having previously had beautiful views of Bangor, the sea, and its shipping. From Capel Cerig down the justly celebrated vale of Nant Gwynant to Bethgelart. In this vale are two small lakes, the higher of which is the only Welsh lake which has any pretensions to compare with our own; and it has one great advantage over them, that it remains wholly free from intrusive objects. We saw it early in the morning; and with the greenness of the meadows at its head, the steep rocks on one of its shores, and the bold mountains at *both* extremities, a feature almost peculiar to itself, it appeared to us truly enchanting. The village of Bethgelart is much altered for the worse: new and formal houses have, in a great measure, supplanted the old rugged and tufted cottages, and a smart hotel has taken the lead of the lowly public house in which I took refreshment almost thirty years ago, previous to a midnight ascent to the summit of Snowdon. At B. we were agreeably surprised by the appearance of Mr. Hare, of New College, Oxford. We slept at Tan-y-bylch, having employed the afternoon in exploring the beauties of the vale of Festiniog. Next day to Barmouth, whence, the following morning, we took boat and rowed up its sublime estuary, which may compare with the finest of Scotland, having the advantage of a superior climate.

From Dolgelly we went to Tal-y-llyn, a solitary and very interesting lake under Cader Idris. Next day, being Sunday, we heard service performed in Welsh, and in the afternoon went part of the way down a beautiful valley to Machynleth, next morning to Aberystwith, and up the Rhydiol to the Devil's Bridge,[1] where we passed the following day in exploring those two rivers, and Hafod in the neighbourhood. I had seen these things long ago, but either my memory or my powers of observation had not done them justice. It rained heavily in the night, and we saw the waterfalls in perfection. While Dora was attempting to make a sketch from the chasm in the rain, I composed by her side the following address to the torrent:

"How art thou named? In search of what strange land,
From what huge height descending? Can such force
Of water issue from a British source?"

. . . . . .

'Next day, viz. last Wednesday, we reached this place, and found all our friends well, except our good and valuable friend, Mr. Monkhouse, who is here, and in a very alarming state of health. His physicians have ordered him to pass the winter in Devonshire, fearing a consumption; but he is certainly not suffering under a regular hectic pulmonary decline: his pulse is good, so is his appetite, and he has no fever, but is deplorably emaciated. He is a near relation of Mrs. W., and one, as you know, of my best friends. I hope to see Mr. Price, at Foxley, in a few days. Mrs. W.'s brother is about to change his present residence for a farm close by Foxley.

'Now, my dear Sir George, what chance is there of your being in Wales during any part of the autumn? I would strain a point to meet you anywhere, were it only

[1] Vol. ii. p. 301.

for a couple of days. Write immediately, or should you be absent without Lady B. she will have the goodness to tell me of your movements. I saw the Lowthers just before I set off, all well. You probably have heard from my sister. It is time to make an end of this long letter, which might have been somewhat less dry if I had not wished to make you master of our whole route. Except ascending one of the high mountains, Snowdon or Cader Idris, we omitted nothing, and saw as much as the shortened days would allow. With love to Lady B. and yourself, dear Sir George, from us all, I remain, ever,

'Most faithfully yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

While on the subject of these tours, I may here add, that in 1828, Wordsworth and his daughter, having passed some time in London with Mr. Quillinan, accompanied Coleridge on an excursion through Belgium and up the Rhine.

The 'Incident at Bruges,'[1] in which there is an allusion to his daughter, the 'Maiden at his Side,' happened then. To quote his words:[2]

Incident at Bruges. — 'This occurred at Bruges in the year 1828. Mr. Coleridge, my daughter, and I, made a tour together in Flanders, upon the Rhine, and returned by Holland. Dora and I, while taking a walk along a retired part of the town, heard the voice as here described, and were afterwards informed that it was a convent, in

[1] See the Poem beginning:

'In Bruges town is many a street
Whence busy life has fled.' *

[2] MSS. I. F.

* Vol. iii. p. 112.

which were many English. We were both much touched, I might say affected, and Dora moved as appears in the verses.'

On the same excursion were suggested the beautiful lines on a Jewish Family, seen in a small valley opposite St. Goar[1] — a group which

> 'cast
> Around the dell a gleam
> Of Palestine, of glory past,
> And proud Jerusalem.'

Jewish Family. — 'Coleridge, and my daughter, and I, in 1828, passed a fortnight upon the banks of the Rhine, principally under the hospitable roof of Mr. Aders of Gotesberg; but two days of the time were spent at St. Goar, or in rambles among the neighbouring valleys. It was at St. Goar that I saw the Jewish family here described. Though exceedingly poor, and in rags, they were not less beautiful than I have endeavoured to make them appear. We had taken a little dinner with us in a basket, and invited them to partake of it, which the mother refused to do, both for herself and her children, saying, it was with them a fast day; adding, diffidently, that whether such observances were right or wrong, she felt it her duty to keep them strictly. The Jews, who are numerous in this part of the Rhine, greatly surpass the German peasantry in the beauty of their features, and in the intelligence of their countenance. But the lower classes of the German peasantry have, here at least, the air of people grievously oppressed. Nursing mothers at the age of seven or eight and twenty, often look haggard and far more decayed and withered than women of Cumberland and Westmoreland twice their age. This comes

[1] See the Poem beginning, 'Genius of Raphael,' vol. ii. p. 210.

from being underfed and overworked in their vineyards in a hot and glaring sun.'

I will conclude this chapter by an extract from one of his letters to a relative who had spent the summer (1828) in France, as it presents a view of his opinions on continental affairs at this period.

'*Rydal Mount, Nov.* 27, 1828.

'My dear C——,

'It gave me much pleasure to learn that your residence in France had answered so well. As I had recommended the step, I felt more especially anxious to be informed of the result. I have only to regret that you did not tell me whether the interests of a foreign country and a brilliant metropolis had encroached more upon the time due to academical studies than was proper.

'As to the revolution which Mr. D—— calculates upon, I agree with him that a great change must take place, but not altogether, or even mainly, from the causes which he looks to, if I be right in conjecturing that he expects that the religionists, who have at present such influence over the king's mind, will be predominant. The extremes to which they wish to carry things are not sufficiently in the spirit of the age to suit their purpose. The French monarchy must undergo a great change, or it will fall altogether. A constitution of government so disproportioned cannot endure. A monarchy, without a powerful aristocracy or nobility graduating into a gentry, and so downwards, cannot long subsist. This is wanting in France, and must continue to be wanting till the restrictions imposed on the disposal of property by will, through the Code Napoleon, are done away with: and it may be observed, by the by, that there is a bareness, some would call it a simplicity, in that code which unfits it for a com-

plex state of society like that of France, so that evasions and stretchings of its provisions are already found necessary, to a degree which will ere long convince the French people of the necessity of disencumbering themselves of it. But to return. My apprehension is, that for the cause assigned, the French monarchy may fall before an aristocracy can be raised to give it necessary support. The great monarchies of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, having not yet been subject to popular revolutions, are still able to maintain themselves, through the old feudal *forces* and qualities, with something, not much, of the feudal *virtues*. This cannot be in France; popular inclinations are much too strong — thanks, I will say so far, to the Revolution. How is a government fit for her condition to be supported, but by religion, and a spirit of honour or refined conscience? Now religion, in a widely extended country plentifully peopled, cannot be preserved from abuse of priestly influence, and from superstition and fanaticism, nor honour, be an operating principle upon a large scale, except through *property* — that is, such accumulations of it, graduated as I have mentioned above, through the community. Thus and thus only can be had exemption from temptation to low habits of mind, leisure for solid education, and dislike to innovation, from a sense in the several classes how much they have to lose; for circumstances often make men wiser, or at least more discreet, when their individual levity or presumption would dispose them to be much otherwise. To what extent that constitution of character which is produced by property makes up for the decay of chivalrous loyalty and strengthens governments, may be seen by comparing the officers of the English army with those of Prussia, &c. How far superior are ours as gentlemen! so much so that British officers can scarcely associate with those of the Continent,

not from pride, but instinctive aversion to their low propensities. But I cannot proceed, and ought, my dear C——, to crave your indulgence for so long a prose.

'When you see Frere, pray give him my kind regards, and say that he shall hear from me the first frank I can procure. Farewell, with kindest love from all,

'Yours, very affectionately,

'W. W.'

CHAPTER XLIII.

ON THE CHURCH OF ROME.

In the 'advertisement' prefixed to his Ecclesiastical Sketches, Mr. Wordsworth states, that in the year 1820, the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, as it was termed, which was then under discussion, 'kept his thoughts in a certain direction,' viz. toward the History of the Church in England, the subject treated by him in those Sonnets.

Among his papers are various letters, or portions of letters, addressed to friends and public men in reference to that question, down to the year 1829, when the 'Roman Catholic Relief Bill' was passed.

One or two specimens of these shall be inserted here.

The following is to Mr. Southey:

'My dear S.,

'I am ashamed not to have done your message about the *Icôn* to my brother.[1] I have no excuse, but that at that time both my body and my memory were run off their legs. I am very glad you thought the answer[2] appeared to you triumphant, for it had struck me as, in the main point, knowledge of the subject, and spirit in the

[1] This refers to Dr. Wordsworth's volume on the authorship of *Icôn Basilikè*. Lond. 1824.

[2] This alludes to Dr. Wordsworth's second publication, entitled, 'King Charles the First the Author of *Icôn Basilikè*.' Lond. 1828.

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'When you see Frere, pray give him my kind regards, and say that he shall hear from me the first frank I can procure. Farewell, with kindest love from all,

'Yours, very affectionately,

'W. W.'

CHAPTER XLIII.

ON THE CHURCH OF ROME.

In the 'advertisement' prefixed to his Ecclesiastical Sketches, Mr. Wordsworth states, that in the year 1820, the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, as it was termed, which was then under discussion, 'kept his thoughts in a certain direction,' viz. toward the History of the Church in England, the subject treated by him in those Sonnets.

Among his papers are various letters, or portions of letters, addressed to friends and public men in reference to that question, down to the year 1829, when the 'Roman Catholic Relief Bill' was passed.

One or two specimens of these shall be inserted here.

The following is to Mr. Southey:

'My dear S.,

'I am ashamed not to have done your message about the *Icôn* to my brother.[1] I have no excuse, but that at that time both my body and my memory were run off their legs. I am very glad you thought the answer[2] appeared to you triumphant, for it had struck me as, in the main point, knowledge of the subject, and spirit in the

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large town where the conversation took place. Monstrous expectation! yet not to be overlooked as an ingredient in the compound of Popery. This "great Catholic interest" we are about to embody in a legislative form. A Protestant Parliament is to turn itself into a canine monster with two heads, which, instead of keeping watch and ward, will be snarling at and bent on devouring each other.

'Whatever enemies the Church of England may have to struggle with now and hereafter, it is clear, that at this juncture she is especially called to take the measure of her strength as opposed to the Church of Rome; that is her most pressing enemy. The Church of England as to the point of private judgment, standing between the two extremes of Popery and Dissent, is entitled to heartfelt reverence: and among thinking men, whose affections are not utterly vitiated, never fails to receive it. Popery will tolerate no private judgment, and Dissent is impatient of anything else. The blessing of providence has thus far preserved the Church of England between the shocks to which she has been exposed from those opposite errors; and, however some of her articles may be disputed about, her doctrines are exclusively scriptural, and her practice is accommodated to the exigencies of our weak nature. If this be so, what has she to fear? Look at Ireland — might be a sufficient answer. Look at the disproportion between her Catholic and Protestant population. Look at the distempered heads of her Roman Catholic Church insisting upon terms, which in France, and even in Austria, dare not be proposed, and which the Pope himself would probably relinquish for a season. Look at the revenues of the Protestant Church, her cathedrals, her churches that once belonged to the Romanists, and where *in imagination*, their worship has never ceased to be celebrated. Can it be doubted that when the yet existing restrictions

are removed, that the disproportion in the population and the wealth of the Protestant Church will become more conspicuous objects for discontent to point at; and that plans, however covert, will be instantly set on foot, with the aid of new powers, for effecting an overthrow, and, if possible, a transfer?

'But all this is too obvious. I would rather argue with those who think that by excluding the Romanists from political power we make them more attached to their religion, and cause them to unite more strongly in support of it. Were this true to the extent maintained, we should still have to balance between the unorganized power which they derive from a sense of injustice real or supposed, and the legitimate organized power which concession would confer upon surviving discontent; for no one, I imagine, is weak enough to suppose that discontent would disappear. But it is a deception, and a most dangerous one, to conclude that if a free passage were given to the torrent, it would lose, by diffusion, its ability to do injury. The checks, as your Lordship well knows, which are after a time necessary to provoke other sects to activity are not wanted here: the Roman Church stands independent of them through its constitution so exquisitely contrived, and through its doctrine and discipline, which give a peculiar and monstrous power to its priesthood. In proof of this, take the injunction of celibacy alone, separating the priesthood from the body of the community, and the practice of confession making them masters of the conscience, while the doctrines give them an absolute power over the will. To submit to such thraldom, men must be bigoted in its favour: and that we see is the case in Spain, in Portugal, in Austria, in Italy, in Flanders, in Ireland, and in all countries where you have Popery in full blow. And does not history prove that,

however other sects may have languished under the relaxing influence of good fortune, Popery has ever been most fiery and rampant when most prosperous?

'But many who do not expect that conciliation will be the result of concession have a further expedient on which they rely much. They propose to take the Romish Church in Ireland into pay, and expect that afterwards its clergy will be as compliant to the government as the Presbyterians in that country have proved. This measure is, in the first place, too disingenuous not to be condemned by honest men; for the government, acting on this policy, would degrade itself by offering bribes to men of a sacred calling to act contrary to their sense of duty. If they be sincere, as priests, and truly spiritual-minded, they will find it impossible to accept of a stipend known to be granted with such expectation. If they be worldlings and false of heart, they will practise double dealing, and seem to support the government while they are actually undermining it; for they know that if they be suspected of sacrificing the interests of the Church they will lose all authority over their flocks. Power and consideration are more valued than money. The priests will not be induced to risk their sway over the people for any sums that our government would venture to afford them out of the exhausted revenues of the empire. Surely they would prefer to such a scanty hire the hope of carving for themselves from the property of the Protestant Church of their country, or even the gratification of stripping usurpation, for such they deem it, of its gains, though there may be no hope to win what others are deprived of. Many English favourers of this scheme are reconciled to what they call a modification of the Irish Protestant establishment, in an application of a portion of the revenues to the support of the Romish Church. This they deem reasonable. Shortly it will be

openly aimed at, and they will rejoice should they accomplish their purpose. But your Lordship will agree with me, that if that happen it would be one of the most calamitous events that ignorance has in our time given birth to. After all, could the *secular* clergy be paid out of this spoliation, or in any other way, the *regulars* would rise in consequence of their degradation; and where would be the influence that could keep them from mischief? They would swarm over the country to prey upon the people still more than they now do. In all the reasonings of the friends to this bribing scheme the distinctive character of the Papal Church is overlooked.

'But they who expect that tranquillity will be a permanent consequence of the Relief Bill, dwell much upon the mighty difference in opinion and feeling between the upper and lower ranks of the Romish communion. They affirm that many keep within the pale of the Church as a point of honour; that others have notions greatly relaxed, and though not at present prepared to separate they will gradually fall off. But what avail the inward sentiments of men, if they are convinced that by acting upon them they will forfeit their outward dignity and power? As long as the political influence which the priests now exercise shall endure, or anything like it, the great proprietors will be obliged to dissemble and to conform in their actions to the demands of that power. Such will be the conduct of the great Roman Catholic proprietors; nay, further, I agree with those who deem it probable that through a natural and reasonable desire to have their property duly represented, many landholders who are now Protestants will be tempted to go over to Popery. This may be thought a poor compliment to Protestantism, since religious scruples, it is said, are all that keep the Papists out: but is not the desire to be in, pushing them on almost to rebellion

at this moment? We are taking, I own, a melancholy view of both sides; but *human* nature, be it what it may, must by legislators be looked at as it is.

'In the treatment of this question we hear perpetually of wrong, but the wrong is all on one side. If the political power of Ireland is to be a transfer from those who are of the state-religion of the country to those who are not, there is nothing gained on the score of justice. We hear also much of *stigma;* but this is not to be done away with unless all offices, the Privy Council, and the chancellorship, be open to them; that is, unless we allow a man to be eligible to keep the king's conscience who has not his own in his keeping, unless we open the throne itself to men of this soul-degrading faith.

'The condition of Ireland is indeed, and long has been, wretched. Lamentable is it to acknowledge, that the mass of her people are so grossly uninformed, and from that cause subject to such delusions and passions, that they would destroy each other were it not for restraints put upon them by a power out of themselves. This power it is that protracts their existence in a state for which otherwise the course of nature would provide a remedy by reducing their numbers through mutual destruction, so that English civilization may fairly be said to have been the shield of Irish barbarism. And now these swarms of degraded people, which could not have existed but through the neglect and misdirected power of the sister island, are, by a withdrawing of that power, to have their own way, and to be allowed to dictate to us. A population vicious in character, as unnatural in immediate origin (for it has been called into birth by short-sighted landlords set upon adding to the number of voters at their command, and by priests, who for lucre's sake favour the increase of marriage), is held forth, as constituting a claim to political power, strong in

proportion to its numbers; though, in a sane view, that claim is in an inverse ratio to them. Brute force, indeed, wherever lodged, as we are too feelingly taught at present, must be measured and met — measured with care in order to be met with fortitude.

'The chief proximate causes of Irish misery and ignorance are Popery, of which I have said so much, and the tenure and management of landed property; and both these have a common origin, viz., the imperfect conquest of the country. The countries subjected by the ancient Romans, and those that in the middle ages were subdued by the northern tribes, afford striking instances of the several ways in which nations may be improved by foreign conquests. The Romans, by their superiority in arts and arms, and, in the earlier period of their history, in virtues also, may seem to have established a moral right to force their institutions upon other nations, whether under a process of decline, or emerging from barbarism; and this they effected, we all know, not by overrunning countries as eastern conquerors have done — and Buonaparte, in our own days — but by completing a regular subjugation, with military roads and garrisons, which became centres of civilization for the surrounding district. Nor am I afraid to add, though the fact might be caught at, as bearing against the general scope of my argument, that both conquerors and conquered owed much to the participation of civil rights which the Romans liberally communicated. The other mode of conquest, that pursued by the northern nations, brought about its beneficial effects, by the settlement of a hardy and vigorous people among the distracted and effeminate nations against whom their incursions were made. The conquerors transplanted with them their independent and ferocious spirit, to reanimate exhausted communities; and in their turn received

a salutary mitigation, till, in process of time, the conqueror and conquered, having a common interest, were lost in each other. To neither of these modes was unfortunate Ireland subject; and her insular territory, by physical obstacles, and still more by moral influences arising out of them, has aggravated the evil consequent upon independence lost as hers was. The writers of the time of Queen Elizabeth have pointed out how unwise it was to transplant among a barbarous people not half subjugated, the institutions that time had matured among those who too readily considered themselves masters of that people. It would be presumptuous in me to advert in detail to the exacerbations and long-lived hatred that have perverted the moral sense in Ireland, obstructed religious knowledge, and denied to her a due share of English refinement and civility. It is enough to observe, that the Reformation was ill supported in that country, and that her soil became, through frequent forfeitures, mainly possessed by men whose hearts were not in the land where their wealth lay.

'But it is too late, we are told, for retrospection. We have no choice between giving way and a sanguinary war. Surely it is rather too much that the country should be required to take the measure of the threatened evil from a cabinet which, by its being divided against itself, and by its remissness and fear of long and harassing debates in the two houses, has for many years past fostered the evil, and in no small part created that danger, the extent of which is now urged as imposing the necessity of granting all demands. Danger is a relative thing, and the first requisite for being in a condition to judge of what we have to dread from the physical force of the Romanists, is to be in sympathy with the Protestants. Had our ministers been truly so, could they have suffered themselves to be

bearded by the Catholic Association for so many years as they have been?

'I speak openly to you, my Lord, though a Member of his Majesty's Privy Council; and, begging your pardon for detaining you so long, I hasten to a conclusion.

'The civil disabilities, for the removal of which Mr. O'Connell and his followers are braving the government, cannot but be indifferent to the great body of the Irish nation, except as means for gaining an end. Take away the intermediate power of the priests, and an insurrection in Brobdignag at the call of the king of Lilliput, might be as hopefully expected as that the Irish people would stir, as they now do, at the call of a political demagogue. Now these civil disabilities do not directly affect the priests; they therefore must have ulterior views: and though it must be flattering to their vanity to show that they have the Irish representation in their own hands, and though their worldly interest and that of their connections will, they know, immediately profit by that dominion, what they look for principally is, the advancement of their religion at the cost of Protestantism; that would bring everything else in its train. While it is obvious that the political agitators could not rouse the people without the intervention of the priests, it is true, also, that the priests could not excite the people without a hope that from the exaltation of their Church their social condition would be improved. What in Irish interpretation these words would mean, we may tremble to think of.

'In whatever way we look, religion is so much mixed up in this matter, that the guardians of the Established Church of the empire are imperiously called upon to show themselves worthy of the high trust reposed in them. You, my Lord, are convinced that in spite of the best securities that can be given, the admission of Roman

Catholics into the legislature is a dangerous experiment. Oaths cannot be framed that will avail here; the only securities to be relied upon are what we have little hope to see — the Roman Church *reforming itself*, and a parliament and a ministry sufficiently sensible of the superiority of the one form of religion over the other, to be resolved, not only to preserve the present rights and immunities of the Protestant Church inviolate, but prepared, by all fair means, for the *extension* of its influence, with a hope that it may gradually prevail over Popery.

'It is, we trust, the intention of Providence that the Church of Rome should in due time disappear; and come what may of the Church of England, we have the satisfaction of knowing, that in defending a government resting upon a Protestant basis, which, say what they will, the other party have abandoned, we are working for the welfare of human kind, and supporting whatever there is of dignity in our frail nature.

'Here I might stop; but I am above measure anxious for the course which the bench of Bishops may take at this crisis: they are appealed to, and even by the heir presumptive to the throne, from his seat in Parliament. There will be an attempt to browbeat them on the score of humanity; but humanity is, if it deserves the name, a calculating and prospective quality; it will on this occasion balance an evil at hand with an infinitely greater one that is sure, or all but sure, to come. Humanity is not shown the less by firmness than by tenderness of heart; it is neither deterred by clamour, nor enfeebled by its own sadness; but it estimates evil and good to the best of its power, acts by the dictates of conscience, and trusts the issue to the Ruler of all things.

'If, my Lord, I have seemed to write with over-con-

fidence in any opinion I have given above, impute it to a wish of avoiding cumbrous qualifying expressions.

'Sincerely do I pray that God may give your Lordship and the rest of your brethren light to guide you, and strength to walk in that light,

'I am, my Lord, &c.

'W. WORDSWORTH.'

Such were Mr. Wordsworth's sentiments in 1829. In politics he was a lover of freedom, to the utmost extent that in his judgment was consistent with the peace and safety of society. His 'Sonnets to Liberty' afford sufficient evidence of this fact. The removal, therefore, of civil disabilities from every class of the community was one of his primary desires; and he would have been among the first to hail the concession of such relief to the Romanists, if such relief had been, in his opinion, consistent with due regard to the maintenance of the institutions of the country. But he regarded the removal of Romish disabilities as opening the way to Romish domination; and he apprehended that they who were advocating such a removal, on the plea of civil liberty, were unconsciously promoting the cause of spiritual tyranny.

Again, as a poet, also, Mr. Wordsworth was predisposed to sympathize with a form of religion which appears to afford some exercise for the imaginative faculty; he was an enthusiastic admirer of the arts of Painting, Architecture, and Sculpture, especially when employed in the service of religion. He loved reverence and decorum, and even splendour and magnificence, in the public worship of God. He had, therefore, no leanings toward a puritan system of Theology or Church Polity. All his prepossessions were in the opposite direction, as his

writings abundantly declare.[1] However, such as we have seen were his opinions in 1829; and they were then of no recent formation, as will be perceived by reference to a previous chapter[2]; and they were maintained unalterably to the close of his life. Of this I will cite only one or two proofs out of many.

In the autumn of 1829 he made a tour in Ireland with J. Marshall, Esq. M. P., of Leeds; and in writing to his sister from that country on the 24th of Sept., he thus expresses himself: 'The Romanists, that is, the lower orders, are entirely under the command of their priests, ready to stir in any commotion to which their spiritual leaders may be inclined to incite them; so that the country may be pronounced to be in an unwholesome if not alarming state. . . . Through the political agitators and the priests, and the bigotry and ignorance of the lower orders, who are so prodigiously numerous, I dread the worst for the Established Church of Ireland. After all, tranquillity might be restored, and the country preserved, if the English parliament and government would see their interest, and do their duty. The fact is, they know not how formidable Popery is; how deeply rooted it is; nor that it is impossible that Ireland can prosper or be at peace, unless the Protestant religion be properly valued by the government.'

Writing in July 1845, to a relative, who, after visiting the College of Maynooth, had published some remarks on the proposed augmentation of the public grant to that College, with the view of showing that the Romish system

[1] See e. g. 'Stanzas on St. Bees,' vol. iv. p. 148 – 153; and 'Devotional Incitements,' vol. ii. p. 202; 'Sonnets on King's College Chapel, Cambridge,' vol. iv. p. 121.

[2] See above, p. 8; p. 25.

of policy, in its ultramontane form, taught in that college, tends to undermine the foundations of the monarchy, and to disorganize society; and that no loyal subject, no intelligent lover of liberty, and no true patriot, who carefully examines the principles of that system in their bearings on the monarchy and constitution of England, can consent to teach or to aid in teaching them at the public expense; he thus speaks:

'*Rydal Mount, June* 30, 1845.

'My dear C ———,

'I ought to have acknowledged my debt to you long ago, but the inflammation in one of my eyes which seized me on my first arrival in London kept its ground for a long time. I had your two first pamphlets read to me, and immediately put them into circulation among my friends in this neighbourhood; but wishing to read them myself, I did not like to write to you till I had done so, as there were one or two passages on which I wished to make a remark.

'As to your arguments, they are unanswerable, and the three tracts do you the greatest possible credit; but the torrent cannot be stemmed, unless we can construct a body, I will not call it a party, upon a new and true principle of action, as you have set forth. Certain questions are forced by the present conduct of government upon the mind of every observing and thinking person. First and foremost, Are we to have a *national* English Church, or is the Church of England to be regarded merely as a sect? and is the *right to the Throne to be put on a new foundation?* Is the present ministry prepared for this, and all that must precede and follow it? Is Ireland an integral and inseparable portion of the Empire or not? If it be, I cannot listen to the argument in favour of

endowing Romanism upon the ground of superiority of *numbers*. The Romanists are not a majority in England and Ireland, taken, as they ought to be, together. As to Scotland, it has its separate kirk by especial covenant. Are the ministers prepared to alter fundamentally the basis of the Union between England and Ireland, and to construct a new one? If they be, let them tell us so at once. In short, they are involving themselves and the Nation in difficulties from which there is no escape — for them at least none. What I have seen of your letter to Lord John M——— I like as well as your two former tracts, and I shall read it carefully at my first leisure moment.'

In the same year he thus writes to his old friend, Mr. Joseph Cottle, of Firfield House, Bristol.

'*Rydal Mount, Dec.* 6, 1845.

'My dear old Friend,

'Now for your little tract, "Heresiarch Church of Rome." I have perused it carefully, and go the whole length with you in condemnation of Romanism, and probably *much further*, by reason of my having passed at least three years of life in countries where Romanism was the prevailing or exclusive religion; and if we are to trust the declaration "By their fruits ye shall know them," I have stronger reasons, in the privilege I have named, for passing a severe condemnation upon leading parts of their faith, and courses of their practice, than others who have never been eye-witnesses of the evils to which I allude. Your little publication is well-timed, and will, I trust, have such an effect as you aimed at upon the minds of its readers.

'And now let me bid you affectionately good bye, with assurance that I do and shall retain to the last a remembrance of your kindness, and of the many pleasant and happy hours, which, at one of the most interesting periods of my life, I passed in your neighbourhood, and in your company.

'Ever, most faithfully yours,

'WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.'

CHAPTER XLIV.

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1826–1831.

Mr. Wordsworth's tour in Ireland in 1829, and the excursion in the preceding year on the Rhine, do not appear to have been very productive of poetical fruits.

'I have often regretted,' he says, speaking of his magnificent poem on the 'Power of Sound,'[1] composed at Rydal Mount, 1829, 'that my tour in Ireland, chiefly performed in the short days of September and October in a carriage and four (I was with Mr. Marshall), supplied my memory with so few images that were new, and with so little motive to write. The lines, however, in this poem,

"Thou too be heard, lone Eagle!" &c.

were suggested near the Giant's Causeway, or rather at the promontory of Fairhead, where a pair of eagles wheeled above our heads, and darted off as if to hide themselves in a blaze of sky made by the setting sun.' The following letter records some of his impressions in this tour.

To G. Huntly Gordon, Esq.

'*Rydal Mount, Dec.* 1, 1829.

'My dear Sir,

'You must not go to Ireland without applying to me, as

[1] Vol. ii. p. 212.

the guide-books for the most part are sorry things, and mislead by their exaggerations. If I were a younger man, and could prevail upon an able artist to accompany me, there are few things I should like better than giving a month or six weeks to explore the county of Kerry only. A judicious topographical work on that district would be really useful, both for the lovers of nature and the observers of manners. As to the Giant's Causeway and the coast of Antrim, you cannot go wrong; there the interests obtrude themselves on every one's notice.

'The subject of the Poor Laws was never out of my sight whilst I was in Ireland; it seems to me next to impossible to introduce a general system of such laws, principally for two reasons: the vast numbers that would have equal claims for relief, and the non-existence of a class capable of looking with effect to their administration. Much is done at present in many places (Derry, for example) by voluntary contributions; but the narrow-minded escape from the burthen, which falls unreasonably upon the charitable; so that assessments in the best-disposed places are to be wished for, could they be effected without producing a greater evil.

'The great difficulty that is complained of in the well managed places is the floating poor, who cannot be excluded, I am told, by any existing law from quartering themselves where they like. Open begging is not practised in many places, but there is no law by which the poor can be prevented from returning to a place which they may have quitted voluntarily, or from which they have been expelled (as I was told). Were it not for this obstacle compulsory local regulations might, I think, be applied in many districts with good effect.

'It would be unfair to myself to quit this momentous subject without adding, that I am a zealous friend to the

great principle of the Poor Laws, as tending, if judiciously applied, much more to elevate than to depress the character of the labouring classes. I have never seen this truth developed as it ought to be in parliament.*

'The day I dined with Lord F. L. Gower at his official residence, in the Phœnix Park, I met there with an intelligent gentleman, Mr. Page, who was travelling in Ireland expressly to collect information upon this subject, which, no doubt, he means to publish. If you should hear of this pamphlet when it comes out procure it, for I am persuaded it will prove well worth reading. Farewell.

'Faithfully yours,

'WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.'

Another lyrical poem was written about the same period, *The Triad*,[1] in which the daughters of the three Poets, Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge,† are grouped

[1] Vol. ii. p. 181.

* [See Wordsworth's opinions on the subject of the Poor Laws, afterwards fully stated in the '*Postscript*' (1835) to the Volume entitled 'Yarrow Revisited, etc.' — Vol. v. p. 252, etc. — H. R.]

† [The poem portrays them in the order in which they are here named — Edith May Southey, the eldest child of Southey, and now the wife of the Rev. John Wood Warter; Dora Wordsworth, afterwards married to Edward Quillinan, Esq.; and Sara Coleridge, now the widow of Henry Nelson Coleridge, Esq. Twenty years after the composition of this poem, a fine public response was given by the daughter of Coleridge, in the dedication of her edition of her Father's '*Biographia Literaria*.' It breathes so beautiful a spirit of filial affection and reverence for him who was her own as well as her Father's friend, and so well illustrates that eloquent truthfulness, which has often given, in late years, to 'dedications' a charm and reality (especially when compared with the tone of the same species of letters in former periods of our literature) — that I am tempted to append it to this chapter in a note. — H. R.]

together, as the three Graces are, hand entwined in hand, in ancient sculpture, and in classic poetry — 'Segnes nodum solvere Gratiæ.'

To the same friend, mentioned above, G. H. Gordon, Esq., who had recounted some misconceptions with regard to this poem, he thus writes:

'*Rydal Mount, Dec.* 15, 1828.

'How strange that any one should be puzzled with the name "Triad" *after* reading the poem! I have turned to Dr. Johnson, and there find "*Triad, three united,*" and not a word more, as nothing more was needed. I should have been rather mortified if *you* had not liked the piece, as I think it contains some of the happiest verses I ever wrote. It had been promised several years to two of the party before a fancy fit for the performance struck me; it was then thrown off rapidly, and afterwards revised with care. During the last week I wrote some stanzas on the *Power of Sound*, which ought to find a place in my larger work if aught should ever come of that.

'In the book on the Lakes, which I have not at hand, is a passage rather too vaguely expressed, where I content myself with saying, that after a certain point of elevation the effect of mountains depends much more upon their form than upon their absolute height. This point, which ought to have been defined, is the one to which fleecy clouds (not thin watery vapours) are accustomed to descend. I am glad you are so much interested with this little tract; it could not have been written without long experience.

'I remain, most faithfully,

'Your much obliged,

'WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.'

Other subjects from home scenes were suggested at this time to his mind. The poem beginning 'The massy ways,'[1] was inspired, in 1826, by his walks on his own terrace; the *Stanzas on a Needle-case*[2] *in the form of a harp*, were written to commemorate a work from the fair hand of the Laureate's daughter; the *Wishing Gate*,[3] composed in 1828, celebrates an object of traditionary and imaginative interest in the Vale of Grasmere. The shadows glancing between the trees, and playing on the grass of the glade, in his own garden, supplied material for those meditative lines:

'This lawn, a carpet all alive
With shadows flung from leaves, to strive
In dance, amid a press
Of sunshine, an apt emblem yields
Of worldlings, revelling in the fields
Of strenuous idleness.

. . . . .

'Yet, spite of all this eager strife,
This ceaseless play, the genuine life
That serves the steadfast hours,
Is in the grass beneath, that grows
Unheeded, and the mute repose
Of sweetly-breathing flowers.'[4]

In connection with this poem the author spoke as follows:[5]

This Lawn.—'This lawn is the sloping one approaching the kitchen-garden at Rydal Mount, and was made out of it. Hundreds of times have I here watched the dancing of shadows amid a press of sunshine, and other beautiful appearances of light and shade, flowers and shrubs. What a contrast between this and the cabbages

[1] Vol. v. p. 64. [2] Vol. ii. p. 43. [3] Vol. ii. p. 188.
[4] Vol. iv. p. 228. [5] MSS. I. F.

and onions and carrots that used to grow there on a piece of ugly-shaped, unsightly ground. No reflection, however, either upon cabbages or onions; the latter, we know, were worshipped by the Egyptians: and he must have a poor eye for beauty who has not observed how much of it there is in the form and colour which cabbages and plants of that genus exhibit through the various stages of their growth and decay. A richer display of colour in vegetable nature can scarcely be conceived than Coleridge, my sister, and I saw in a bed of potato-plants in blossom near a hut upon the moor between Inversneyd and Loch Katrine. These blossoms were of such extraordinary beauty and richness that no one could have passed them without notice: but the sense must be cultivated through the mind before we can perceive these inexhaustible treasures of nature — for such they truly are — without the least necessary reference to the *utility* of her productions, or even to the laws whereupon, as we learn by research, they are dependent. Some are of opinion that the habit of analyzing, decomposing, and anatomizing is inevitably unfavourable to the perception of beauty. People are led into this mistake by overlooking the fact that such processes being to a certain extent within the reach of a limited intellect, we are apt to ascribe to them that insensibility of which they are, in truth, the effect, and not the cause. Admiration and love, to which all knowledge truly vital must tend, are felt by men of real genius in proportion as their discoveries in natural philosophy are enlarged; and the beauty, in form, of a plant or an animal is not made less, but more apparent, as a whole, by more accurate insight into its constituent properties and powers.

'A *savant* who is not also a poet in soul, and a religionist in heart, is a feeble and unhappy creature.'

Three poems, also, of a serious cast and devotional

character, somewhat later in date, may properly be mentioned here: 'Presentiments,'[1] composed in 1830; 'The Primrose on the Rock,'[2] written in 1831; 'Devotional Incitements,'[3] to which may be added 'Rural Illusions,'[4] written in 1832.

Contemporary with the last named poem was that called 'Thoughts on the Seasons,'[5] also of a pensive character. So also was 'The Gleaner,'[6] and the verses on the 'Gold and Silver Fishes in a Vase,'[7] and its sequel 'Liberty,'[8] and 'Humanity.'[9] These fishes were presented to the Poet by a very dear and accomplished friend, Miss M. J. Jewsbury, to whose memory he has paid an affectionate tribute in the printed note attached to the poem on 'Liberty.'[10]* The fishes remained for some time in a glass

[1] Vol. ii. p. 197. [2] Vol. ii. p. 193. [3] Vol. ii. p. 202.
[4] Vol. ii. p. 60. [5] Vol. iv. p. 233. [6] Vol. v. p. 18.
[7] Vol. v. p. 10. [8] Vol. v. p. 12. [9] Vol. iv. p. 229.
[10] Vol. v. p. 16.

* ['She accompanied her husband, the Rev. Wm. Fletcher, to India, and died of cholera, at the age of thirty-two or thirty-three years, on her way from Shalapore to Bombay, deeply lamented by all who knew her.

'Her enthusiasm was ardent, her piety steadfast; and her great talents would have enabled her to be eminently useful in the difficult path of life to which she had been called. The opinion she entertained of her own performances, given to the world under her maiden name, Jewsbury, was modest and humble, and, indeed far below their merits; as is often the case with those who are making trial of their powers, with a hope to discover what they are best fitted for. In one quality, viz., quickness in the motions of her mind, she had, within the range of the Author's acquaintance, no equal.' Note referred to above; see also Chap. iii. of these 'Memoirs,' Vol. i. p. 24. Miss Jewsbury's works were 'Phantasmagoria,' 'The Three Histories,' 'Letters to the Young,' and 'Lays of Leisure Hours.' See also Chorley's 'Memorials of Mrs. He-

vase in the morning-room at Rydal; but at last they languished in their confinement; and 'one of them,' says Mr. Wordsworth, 'being all but dead, they were taken to the pool under the old pollard oak. The apparently dying one lay on its side, unable to move. I used to watch it; and about the tenth day it began to right itself, and in a few days more was able to swim about with its companions. For many months they continued to prosper in their new place of abode; but one night, by an unusually great flood, they were swept out of the pool, and perished, to our great regret.'[1]

Humanity. — 'These verses, and the preceding ones, entitled "Liberty," were composed as one piece, which Mrs. W. complained of as unwieldy and ill-proportioned; and accordingly it was divided into two, on her judicious recommendation.'

The poem of 'The Poet and caged Turtle-Dove'[2] ought to be mentioned here.

> 'As often as I murmur here
> My half-formed melodies,
> Straight from her osier mansion near,
> The turtle-dove replies.'

'This dove,' said the Poet,[3] 'was one of a pair that had been given to my daughter by our excellent friend, Miss Jewsbury (the donor of the fish), who went to India with her husband, Mr. Fletcher, where she died of cholera. The dove survived its mate many years, and was killed, to our great sorrow, by a neighbour's cat, that got in at a

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mans,' Chap. iv. for an interesting account of the origin of Wordsworth's friendship for Miss Jewsbury, in an application to him for counsel in the discipline of her mind. — H. R.]

[1] MSS. I. F. [2] Vol. ii. p. 55. [3] MSS. I. F.

window and dragged it partly out of the cage. These verses were composed *extempore* to the letter, in the terrace summer-house before spoken of. It was the habit of the bird to begin cooing and murmuring whenever it heard me making my verses.'

In the autumn of 1830, the sonnet on Chatsworth [1] was written, under the following circumstances, as detailed by Mr. Wordsworth:

Sonnet 49. 'Chatsworth,' &c. — 'I have reason to remember the day that gave rise to this sonnet, the 6th November, 1830. Having undertaken — a great feat for me — to ride my daughter's pony from Westmoreland to Cambridge, that she might have the use of it while on a visit to her uncle at Trinity Lodge, on my way from Bakewell to Matlock I turned aside to Chatsworth, and had scarcely gratified my curiosity by the sight of that celebrated place, before there came on a severe storm of wind and rain, which continued till I reached Derby, both man and pony in a pitiable plight. For myself, I went to bed at noon-day. In the course of that journey I had to encounter a storm worse, if possible, in which the pony could (or would) only make his way slantwise. I mention this merely to add, that, notwithstanding this battering, I composed, on pony-back, the lines to the memory of Sir George Beaumont, suggested during my recent visit to Coleorton.'

On the same expedition were composed, also, the Elegiac musings in the Grounds of Coleorton Hall.[2] Mr. Wordsworth's dear friend, Sir George Beaumont, had departed this life on the 7th February, 1827, and was soon followed by his widow, Lady Beaumont, who died 14th July, 1829. Writing, in 1830, to his sister from

[1] Vol. ii p. 307.

[2] Vol. v. p. 139.

Coleorton, the scene of so many happy days for so many years in succession, he says, 'The changes in the grounds at Coleorton will in time prove decided improvements: at present, parts are cold and bare. Sir George' (the successor in the baronetcy to Mr. Wordsworth's friend) 'took me round them. When I sat down in Lady Beaumont's grotto, near the fountain, I was suddenly overcome, and could not speak for tears. This visit gave occasion to the elegiac musings above mentioned.'

Three other poems, of a very different cast, were written at nearly the same period (1830). These are 'The Armenian Lady's Love,' 'The Egyptian Maid,' and 'The Russian Fugitive,'[1] which are beautiful specimens of the author's powers of blending the simplicity and tenderness of the old ballad with the exquisite graces of a most pure and finished diction.

About this time were composed two other poems, of a personal interest, one on the author's own portrait, by Pickersgill, now at St. John's College, Cambridge,[2] 'Go, faithful Portrait;' the other an inscription for a stone in the grounds at Rydal,[3]

> 'In these fair vales hath many a tree,
> At Wordsworth's suit, been spared;'

being like an epitaph on himself.

[1] Vol. i. p. 282; vol. iii. p. 184; vol. v. p. 46.
[2] Vol. ii. p. 308. [3] Vol. v. p. 64. See Vol. I. p. 23.

[The dedication of the last edition of Coleridge's '*Biographia Literaria*,' spoken of in a previous note in this chapter, is as follows:

'To
* WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, Esq., P. L.
My Dear Mr Wordsworth,
I have received with great pleasure your permission to inscribe

to you this new edition of my Father's *Biographia Literaria*. You will find in it some of the latest writings of my dear departed Husband; — some too of my own, to which I know you will be indulgent; but my chief reason for dedicating it to you is, that it contains, though only in a brief and fragmentary form, an account of the Life and Opinions of your friend S. T. Coleridge, in which I feel assured that, however you may dissent from portions of the latter, you take a high and peculiar interest. His name was early associated with your's from the time when you lived as neighbours, and both together sought the Muse, in the lovely Vale of Stowey. That this association may endure as long as you are both remembered, — that not only as a Poet, but as a Lover and Teacher of Wisdom, my Father may continue to be spoken of in connection with you, while your writings become more and more fully and widely appreciated, is the dearest and proudest wish that I can form for his memory.

I remain, dear Mr. Wordsworth,

With deep affection, admiration, and respect,

Your Child in heart and faithful Friend,

SARA COLERIDGE.

Regent's Park,
January 30, 1847.'

'Biographia Literaria,' Edit. 1847, Vol. I. p. 1. — H. R.]

CHAPTER XLV.

ON EDUCATION.

THE true poet is a teacher. Such was the language of the writers of antiquity,[1] and such was the sentiment which animated Mr. Wordsworth, and regulated his practice in the discharge of his poetical functions. Hence, the subject of EDUCATION was one in which he felt a personal and professional interest; and the design of the present chapter will be to present his opinions on that topic in his own words.

The first paper which I shall insert is a letter from Mr. Wordsworth to a friend who had consulted him on the education of a daughter: the date of this communication cannot be precisely fixed; but it appears to be about 1806.

'My dear Sir,

'I am happy to hear of the instructions which you are preparing for parents, and feel honoured by your having offered to me such an opportunity of conveying to the public any information I may possess upon the subject;

[1] See the speech of Æschylus in Aristoph. Ran. 1028–1034. Hor. A. P. 391–400.

> 'Sic honor et nomen divinis vatibus atque
> Carminibus venit.'

Compare Mr. Wordsworth's letter to Sir George Beaumont, Vol. I. p. 342. 'Every great poet is a teacher: I wish to be considered as a teacher — or as nothing.'

but, in truth, I am so little competent, in the present unarranged state of my ideas, to write anything of value, that it would be the highest presumption in me to attempt it. This is not mock modesty, but rigorous and sober truth. As to the case of your own child, I will set down a few thoughts, which I do not hope will throw much light on your mind, but they will show my willingness to do the little that is in my power.

'The child being the child of a man like you, what I have to say will lie in small compass.

'I consider the facts which you mention as indicative of what is commonly called sensibility, and of quickness and talent, and shall take for granted that they are so; you add that the child is too much noticed by grown people, and apprehend selfishness.

'Such a child will almost always be too much noticed; and it is scarcely possible entirely to guard against the evil: hence vanity, and under bad management selfishness of the worst kind. And true it is, that under better and even the best management, such constitutions are liable to selfishness; not showing itself in the shape of tyranny, caprice, avarice, meanness, envy, skulking, and base self-reference; but selfishness of a worthier kind, yet still rightly called by that name. What I mean I shall explain afterwards.

'Vanity is not the necessary or even natural growth of such a temperament; quite the contrary. Such a child, if neglected and suffered to run wild, would probably be entirely free from vanity, owing to the liveliness of its feelings, and the number of its resources. It would be by nature independent and sufficient for itself. But as such children, in these times in particular, are rarely if ever neglected, or rather rarely if ever not far too much noticed, it is a hundred to one your child will have more

vanity than you could wish. This is one evil to be guarded against. Formerly, indeed till within these few years, children were very carelessly brought up; at present they too early and too habitually feel their own importance, from the solicitude and unremitting attendance which is bestowed upon them.* A child like yours, I believe, unless under the wisest guidance, would prosper most where she was the least noticed and the least made of; I mean more than this, where she received the least cultivation. She does not stand in need of the stimulus of praise (as much as can benefit her, *i. e.* as much as her nature requires, it will be impossible to withhold from her); nor of being provoked to exertion, or, even if she be not injudiciously thwarted, to industry. Nor can there be any need to be *sedulous* in calling out her affections; her own lively enjoyments will do all this for her, and also point out what is to be done to her. But take all the pains you can, she will be too much noticed. Other evils will also beset her, arising more from herself; and how are these to be obviated? But, first, let us attempt to find what these evils will be.

'Observe, I put all gross mismanagement out of the question, and I believe they will then probably be as follows: first, as mentioned before, a considerable portion of vanity. But if the child be not constrained too much, and be left sufficiently to her own pursuits, and be not too anxiously tended, and have not her mind planted over by art with likings that do not spring naturally up in it, this will by the liveliness of her independent enjoyment almost entirely disappear, and she will become modest and diffident; and being not apt from the same ruling cause, — I mean the freshness of her own sensations, — to compare

* [See 'The Prelude,' Book v. '*Books*,' P. 116. — H. R.]

herself with others, she will hold herself in too humble estimation. But she will probably still be selfish; and this brings me to the explanation of what I hinted at before, viz., in what manner she will be selfish.

'It appears, then, to me that all the permanent evils which you have to apprehend for your daughter, supposing you should live to educate her yourself, may be referred to this principle, — an undue predominance of present objects over absent ones, which, as she will surely be distinguished by an extreme love of those about her, will produce a certain restlessness of mind, calling perpetually for proofs of ever-living regard and affection: she must be loved as much and in the same way as she loves, or she will not be satisfied. Hence, quickness in taking offence, petty jealousies and apprehensions lest she is neglected or loses ground in people's love, a want of a calm and steady sense of her own merits to secure her from these fits of imagined slights; for, in the first place, she will, as is hinted at before, be in general deficient in this just estimation of her own worth, and will further be apt to forget everything of that kind in the present sense of supposed injury. She will (all which is referable to the same cause) in the company of others, have too constant a craving for sympathy up to a height beyond what her companions are capable of bestowing; this will often be mortifying to herself, and burthensome to others; and should circumstances be untoward, and her mind be not sufficiently furnished with ideas and knowledge, this craving would be most pernicious to herself, preying upon mind and body. She will be too easily pleased, apt to overrate the merits of new acquaintances, subject to fits of over-love and over-joy, in absence from those she loves full of fears and apprehensions, &c., injurious to her health; her passions for the most part will be happy and

good, but she will be too little mistress of them. The distinctions which her intellect will make will be apt, able, and just, but in conversation she will be prone to overshoot herself, and commit eloquent blunders through eagerness. In fine, her manners will be frank and ardent, but they will want dignity; and a want of dignity will be the general defect of her character.

'Something of this sort of character, which I have thus loosely sketched, and something of the sort of selfishness to which I have adverted, it seems to me that under the best management you have reason to apprehend for your daughter. If she should happen to be an only child, or the only sister of brothers who would probably idolize her, one might prophesy almost with absolute confidence that most of these qualities would be found in her in a great degree. How then is the evil to be softened down or prevented? Assuredly, not by mortifying her, which is the course commonly pursued with such tempers; nor by preaching to her about her own defects; nor by overrunning her infancy with books about good boys and girls, and bad boys and girls, and all that trumpery; but (and this is the only important thing I have to say upon the subject) by putting her in the way of acquiring without measure or limit such knowledge as will lead her out of herself, such knowledge as is interesting for its own sake; things known because they are interesting, not interesting because they are known; in a word, by leaving her at liberty to luxuriate in such feelings and images as will feed her mind in silent pleasure. This nourishment is contained in fairy tales,* romances, the best biographies

* [See 'The Prelude,' Book v., passage ending

'The child, whose love is here, at least, doth reap
One precious gain, that he forgets himself.'

P. 121. — H. R.]

and histories, and such parts of natural history relating to the powers and appearances of the earth and elements, and the habits and structure of animals, as belong to it, not as an art or science, but as a magazine of form and feeling. This kind of knowledge is purely good, a direct antidote to every evil to be apprehended, and food absolutely necessary to preserve the mind of a child like yours from morbid appetites. Next to these objects comes such knowledge as, while it is chiefly interesting for its own sake, admits the fellowship of another sort of pleasure, that of complacence from the conscious exertion of the faculties and love of praise. The accomplishments of dancing, music, and drawing, rank under this head; grammar, learning of languages, botany probably, and out of the way knowledge of arts and manufactures, &c. The second class of objects, as far as they tend to feed vanity and self-conceit, are evil; but let them have their just proportion in the plan of education, and they will afterwards contribute to destroy these, by furnishing the mind with power and independent gratification: the vanity will disappear, and the good will remain.

'Lastly comes that class of objects which are interesting almost solely because they are known, and the knowledge may be displayed; and this unfortunately comprehends three fourths of what, according to the plan of modern education, children's heads are stuffed with;* that is, minute, remote, or trifling facts in geography, topography, natural history, chronology, &c., or acquisitions

* [See 'The Prelude,' Book v., where, in contrast with such lore, the Poet speaks of

—— 'knowledge, rightly honoured with that name.—
Knowledge not purchased by the loss of power.'

P. 124.—H. R.]

in art, or accomplishments which the child makes by rote, and which are quite beyond its age; things of no value in themselves, but as they show cleverness; things hurtful to any temper, but to a child like yours absolute poison. Having said thus much, it seems almost impertinent to add that your child, above all, should, I might say, be chained down to the severest attention to truth, — I mean to the minutest accuracy in everything which she relates; this will strike at the root of evil by teaching her to form correct notions of present things, and will steadily strengthen her mind. Much caution should be taken not to damp her natural vivacity, for this may have a very bad effect; and by the indirect influence of the example of manly and dignified manners any excessive wildnesses of her own will be best kept under. Most unrelaxing firmness should from the present hour be maintained in withstanding such of her desires as are grossly unreasonable. But indeed I am forgetting to whom I am speaking, and am ashamed of these precepts; they will show my good will, and in that hope alone can I suffer them to stand. Farewell, there is great reason to congratulate yourself in having a child so promising; and you have my best and most ardent wishes that she may be a blessing to her parents and every one about her.'

The following is to his friend Archdeacon Wrangham; it was written from Allan Bank, Grasmere, in 1808.

'*Grasmere, June* 5, 1808.

'My dear Wrangham,

'I have this moment received your letter.

'——— is a most provoking fellow; very kind, very humane, very generous, very ready to serve, with a thousand other good qualities, but in the practical business of

life the arrantest mar-plan that ever lived. When I first wrote to you, I wrote also to him, sending the statement which I sent to you, and begging his exertions *among his friends*. By and by comes back my statement, having undergone a *rifacimento* from his hands, and *printed*, with an accompanying letter, saying that if some of the principal people in this neighbourhood who had already subscribed would put their names to this paper, testifying that this was a proper case for charitable interferences, or that the *persons mentioned were proper objects of charity*, that he would have the printed paper inserted in the public newspapers, &c. Upon which, my sister wrote to him, that in consequence of what had been already subscribed, and what we had reason to expect from those friends who were privately stirring in the business, among whom we chiefly alluded to you, in our own minds, as one on whom we had most dependence, that there would be no necessity *for public advertisements*, but that if among his private friends he could raise any money for us, we should be very glad to receive it. And upon this does he write to you in this (what shall I call it? for I am really vexed!) blundering manner! I will not call upon you to undertake the awkward task of rebuilding that part of the edifice which ——— has destroyed, but let what remains be preserved; and if a little could be added, there would be no harm. I must request you to transmit the money to me, with the names of the persons to whom we are obliged.

. . . . . .

'With regard to the more important part of your letter, I am under many difficulties. I am writing from a window which gives me a view of a little boat, gliding quietly about upon the surface of our basin of a lake. I should like to be in it, but what could I do with such a vessel in the heart of the Atlantic Ocean? As this boat would be

to that navigation, so is my letter to the subject upon which you would set me afloat. Let me, however, say, that I have read your sermon (which I lately received from Longman) with much pleasure; I only gave it a cursory perusal, for since it arrived our family has been in great confusion, we having removed to another house, in which we are not yet half settled. The Appendix I had received before in a frank, and of that I feel myself more entitled to speak, because I had read it more at leisure. I am entirely of accord with you in chiefly recommending religious books for the poor; but of many of those which you recommend I can neither speak in praise nor blame, as I have never read them. Yet, as far as my own observation goes, which has been mostly employed upon agricultural persons in thinly-peopled districts, I cannot find that there is much disposition to read among the labouring classes, or much occasion for it. Among manufacturers and persons engaged in sedentary employments, it is, I know, very different. The labouring man in agriculture generally carries on his work either in solitude or with his own family — with persons whose minds he is thoroughly acquainted with, and with whom he is under no temptation to enter into discussions, or to compare opinions. He goes home from the field, or the barn, and within and about his own house he finds a hundred little jobs which furnish him with a change of employment which is grateful and profitable; then comes supper, and bed. This for week-days. For Sabbaths, he goes to church with us often or mostly twice a day; on coming home, some one turns to the Bible, finds the text, and probably reads the chapter whence it is taken, or perhaps some other; and in the afternoon the master or mistress frequently reads the Bible, if alone; and on this day the mistress of the house *almost always* teaches the children

to read, or, as they express it, hears them a lesson; or if not thus employed, they visit their neighbours, or receive them in their own houses as they drop in, and keep up by the hour a slow and familiar chat. This kind of life, of which I have seen much, and which I know would be looked upon with little complacency by many religious persons, is peaceable, and as innocent as (the frame of society and the practices of government being what they are) we have a right to expect; besides, it is much more intellectual than a careless observer would suppose. One of our neighbours, who lives as I have described, was yesterday walking with me; and as we were pacing on, talking about indifferent matters, by the side of a brook, he suddenly said to me, with great spirit and a lively smile, "I *like* to walk where I can hear the sound of a beck!" (the word, as you know, in our dialect for a brook).* I cannot but think that this man, without being conscious of it, has had many devout feelings connected with the appearances which have presented themselves to him in his employment as a shepherd, and that the pleasure of his heart at that moment was an acceptable offering to the Divine Being. But to return to the subject of books. I find among the people I am speaking of, half-penny ballads and penny and two-penny histories in great abundance; these are often bought as charitable tributes to the poor persons who hawk them about, (and it is the best way of procuring them.) They are frequently stitched together

* [See note to sonnet 'On the projected Kendal and Windermere Railway,' Oct., 1844. 'The degree and kind of attachment which many of the yeomanry feel to their small inheritances can scarcely be overrated. Near the house of one of them stands a magnificent tree, which a neighbour of the owner advised him to fell for profit's sake. "Fell it!" exclaimed the yeoman, "I had rather fall on my knees and worship it."' Vol. II. p. 319. — H. R.]

in tolerably thick volumes, and such I have read; some of the contents, though not often religious, very good; others objectionable, either for the superstition in them, such as prophecies, fortune-telling, &c., or more frequently for indelicacy. I have so much felt the influence of these straggling papers, that I have many a time wished that I had talents to produce songs, poems, and little histories that might circulate among other good things in this way, supplanting partly the bad flowers and useless herbs, and to take place of weeds. Indeed, some of the poems which I have published were composed, not without a hope that at some time or other they might answer this purpose. The kind of library which you recommend would not, I think, for the reasons given above, be of much direct use in any of the agricultural districts of Cumberland and Westmoreland with which I am acquainted, though almost every person here can read; I mean of general use as to morals or behaviour. It might, however, with individuals, do much in awakening enterprise, calling forth ingenuity, and fostering genius. I have known several persons who would eagerly have sought, not after these books merely, but *any* books, and would have been most happy in having such a collection to repair to. The knowledge thus acquired would also have spread, by being dealt about in conversation among their neighbours, at the door, and by the fire-side; so that it is not easy to foresee how far the good might extend; and harm I can see none which would not be greatly overbalanced by the advantage. The situation of manufacturers is deplorably different. The monotony of their employments renders some sort of stimulus, intellectual or bodily, absolutely necessary for them. Their work is carried on in clusters, — men from different parts of the world, and perpetually changing; so that every individual is constantly in the way of being

brought into contact with new notions and feelings, and being unsettled in his own accordingly; a select library, therefore, in such situations may be of the same use as a public dial, keeping everybody's clock in some kind of order.

'Besides contrasting the manufacturer with the agriculturalist, it may be observed, that he has much more leisure; and in his over hours, not having other pleasant employment to turn to, he is more likely to find reading a relief. What, then, are the books which should be put in his way? Without being myself a clergyman, I have no hesitation in saying, chiefly religious ones; though I should not go so far as you seemed inclined to do, excluding others because they are not according to the letter or in the spirit of your profession. I, with you, feel little disposed to admire several of those mentioned by Gilbert Burns, much less others which you name as having been recommended. In Gilbert B.'s collection there may be too little religion, and I should fear that you, like all other clergymen, may confine yourself too exclusively to that concern which you justly deem the most important, but which by being exclusively considered can never be thoroughly understood. I will allow, with you, that a religious faculty is the eye of the soul; but, if we would have successful soul-oculists, not merely that organ, but the general anatomy and constitution of the intellectual frame must be studied; for the powers of that eye are affected by the general state of the system. My meaning is, that piety and religion will be the best understood by him who takes the most comprehensive view of the human mind, and that, for the most part, they will strengthen with the general strength of the mind, and that this is best promoted by a due mixture of direct and indirect nourishment and discipline. For example, "Par-

adise Lost," and "Robinson Crusoe," might be as serviceable as Law's "Serious Call," or Melmoth's "Great Importance of a Religious Life;" at least, if the books be all good, they would mutually assist each other. In what I have said, though following my own thoughts merely as called forth by your Appendix, is *implied* an answer to your request that I would give you "half an idea upon education as a national object." I have only kept upon the surface of the question, but you must have deduced, that I deem any plan of national education in a country like ours most difficult to apply to practice. In Switzerland, or Sweden, or Norway, or France, or Spain, or anywhere but Great Britain, it would be comparatively easy. Heaven and hell are scarcely more different from each other than Sheffield and Manchester, &c., differ from the plains and valleys of Surrey, Essex, Cumberland, or Westmoreland. We have mighty cities, and towns of all sizes, with villages and cottages scattered everywhere. We are mariners, miners, manufacturers in tens of thousands, traders, husbandmen, everything. What form of discipline, what books or doctrines — I will not say would equally suit all these — but which, if happily fitted for one, would not perhaps be an absolute nuisance in another? You will, also, have deduced that nothing romantic can be said with truth of the influence of education upon the district in which I live. We have, thank Heaven, free schools, or schools with some endowment, almost everywhere; and almost every one can read. But not because we have free or endowed schools, but because our land is, far more than elsewhere, tilled by men who are the owners of it; and as the population is not over-crowded, and the vices which are quickened and cherished in a crowded population do not therefore prevail, parents have more ability and inclination to send their children to school;

much more than in manufacturing districts, and also, though in a less degree, more than in agricultural ones where the tillers are not proprietors. If in Scotland the children are sent to school, where the parents have not the advantage I have been speaking of, it is chiefly because their labour can be turned to no account at home. Send among them manufacturers, or farmers on a large scale, and you may indeed substitute Sunday-schools or other modes of instructing them; but the ordinary parish schools will be neglected. 'The influence of our schools in this neighbourhood can never be understood, if this, their connection with the state of landed property, be overlooked. In fact, that influence is not striking. The people are not habitually religious, in the common sense of the word, much less godly. The effect of their schooling is chiefly seen by the activity with which the young persons emigrate, and the success attending it; and at home, by a general orderliness and gravity, with habits of independence and self-respect: nothing obsequious or fawning is ever to be seen amongst them.

'It may be added, that this ability (from the two causes, land and schools) of giving their children instruction, contributes to spread a respect for scholarship through the country. If in any family one of the children should be quicker at his book, or fonder of it than others, he is often marked out in consequence for the profession of a clergyman. This (before the mercantile or manufacturing employments held out such flattering hopes) very generally happened; so that the schools of the North were the great nurseries of curates, several of whom got forward in their profession, some with and others without the help of a university education; and, in all instances, such connection of families (all the members of which lived in the humblest and plainest manner, working with their

own hands as labourers) with a learned and dignified profession, assisted (and still does, though in a less degree) not a little to elevate their feelings, and conferred importance on them in their own eyes. But I must stop, my dear Wrangham. Begin your education at the top of society; let the head go in the right course, and the tail will follow. But what can you expect of national education conducted by a government which for twenty years resisted the abolition of the slave trade, and annually debauches the morals of the people by every possible device? holding out temptation with one hand, and scourging with the other. The distilleries and lotteries are a standing record that the government cares nothing for the morals of the people, and that all which they want is their money. But wisdom and justice are the only true sources of the revenue of a people; preach this, and may you not preach in vain!

'Wishing you success in every good work, I remain your affectionate friend,

'W. WORDSWORTH.

'Thanks for your inquiries about our little boy, who is well, though not yet quite strong.'

In 'THE EXCURSION,' published in 1814, he anticipated the happiest results from the efforts then made for the general diffusion of knowledge by public societies in England; and he expressed an earnest desire for the arrival of the time when the state would regard it as an obligation laid upon itself to provide for the instruction of the people.

'O for the coming of that glorious time,
When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth

> And best protection, this imperial Realm,
> While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
> An obligation, on her part to *teach*
> Them who are born to serve her and obey;
> Binding herself by statute to secure
> For all the children whom her soil maintains
> The rudiments of letters, and inform
> The mind with moral and religious truth,
> Both understood and practised.'[1]

The expectations and desires uttered in these lines were never abandoned, but were in some degree modified and tempered by subsequent experience and reflection, the results of which were, in part, communicated to a person pre-eminent in learning, piety, and ability, whose memory will long be cherished with feelings of affectionate tenderness by all who enjoyed his friendship, and whose name will ever be identified with the cause of sound religion in this country — The Rev. Hugh James Rose, B. D., formerly Principal of King's College, London.

A conversation with Mr. Rose on the subject of education, in the year 1828, led to the following letters from Mr. Wordsworth's pen.

[1] Excursion, book ix. vol. vi. p. 267. See also the note on the Madras system; and the note prefixed to the Thanksgiving Ode in 1816, vol. iii. p. 241. 'Let me hope that the martial qualities which I venerate will be fostered by adhering to those good old usages which experience has sanctioned, and by availing ourselves of new means of indisputable promise, particularly by applying in its utmost possible extent that system of tuition whose master-spring is a habit of gradually enlightened subordination, — by imparting knowledge, civil, moral, and religious, in such measure that the mind among all classes of the community may love, admire, and be prepared to defend that country under whose protection its faculties have been unfolded.'

To the Rev. Hugh James Rose, Horsham, Sussex.[1]

'*Rydal Mount, Dec.* 11, 1828.

'My dear Sir,

'I have read your excellent sermons delivered before the University[2] several times. In nothing were my notions different from yours as there expressed. It happened that I had been reading just before Bishop Bull's sermon,[3] of which you speak so highly: it had struck me just in the same way as an inestimable production. I was highly gratified by your discourses, and cannot but think that they must have been beneficial to the hearers, there abounds in them so pure a fervour. I have as yet bestowed less attention upon your German controversy[4] than so important a subject deserves.

'Since our conversation upon the subject of Education, I have found no reason to alter the opinions I then expressed. Of those who seem to me to be in error, two parties are especially prominent; they, the most conspicuous head of whom is Mr. Brougham, who think that sharpening of intellect and attainment of knowledge are

[1] I am indebted for these letters to the kindness of Mrs. H. J. Rose.

[2] 'On the Commission and consequent Duties of the Clergy,' preached before the University of Cambridge, in April, 1826, and published in 1828.

[3] The title of which is, 'The Priest's Office difficult and dangerous.' It will be found in vol. i. p. 137, of Dr. Burton's edition of the bishop's works.

[4] 'The State of the Protestant Religion in Germany,' a series of discourses preached before the University of Cambridge, by the Rev. Hugh James Rose; Lond. 1825: and his 'Letter to the Bishop of London, in reply to Mr. Pusey's work on that subject;' Lond. 1829.

things good in themselves, without reference to the circumstances under which the intellect *is* sharpened, or to the quality of the knowledge acquired. "Knowledge," says Lord Bacon, "is power," but surely not less for evil than for good. Lord Bacon spoke like a philosopher; but they who have that maxim in their mouths the oftenest, have the least understanding of it.

'The other class consists of persons who are aware of the importance of religion and morality above everything; but, from not understanding the constitution of our nature and the composition of society, they are misled and hurried on by zeal in a course which cannot but lead to disappointment. One instance of this fell under my own eyes the other day in the little town of Ambleside, where a party, the leaders of which are young ladies, are determined to set up a school for girls on the Madras system, confidently expecting that these girls will in consequence be less likely to go astray when they grow up to women. Alas, alas! they may be taught, I own, more quickly to read and write under the Madras system, and to answer more readily, and perhaps with more intelligence, questions put to them, than they could have done under dame-teaching. But poetry may, with deference to the philosopher and the religionist, be consulted in these matters; and I will back Shenstone's schoolmistress, by her winter fire and in her summer garden-seat, against all Dr. Bell's sour-looking teachers in petticoats that I have ever seen.

'What is the use of pushing on the education of girls so fast, and mainly by the stimulus of Emulation, who, to say nothing worse of her, is cousin-german to Envy? What are you to do with these girls? what demand is there for the ability that they may have prematurely acquired? Will they not be indisposed to bend to any

kind of hard labour or drudgery? and yet many of them must submit to it, or do wrong. The mechanism of the Bell system is not required in small places; praying after the *fugleman* is not like praying at a mother's knee. The Bellites overlook the difference: they talk about moral discipline; but wherein does it encourage the imaginative feelings, without which the practical understanding is of little avail, and too apt to become the cunning slave of the bad passions. I dislike *display* in everything; above all in education. . . . The old dame did not affect to make theologians or logicians; but she taught to read; and she practised the memory, often, no doubt, by rote; but still the faculty was improved: something, perhaps, she explained, and trusted the rest to parents, to masters, and to the pastor of the parish. I am sure as good daughters, as good servants, as good mothers and wives, were brought up at that time as now, when the world is so much less humble-minded. A hand full of employment, and a head not above it, with such principles and habits as may be acquired without the Madras machinery, are the best security for the chastity of wives of the lower rank.

'Farewell. I have exhausted my paper.

'Your affectionate

'W. WORDSWORTH.'

Perhaps it may be thought by some that Mr. Wordsworth does not quite enough take into account the fact, that it is no longer an open question whether the lower classes shall be instructed or no; and that, in the present general diffusion of knowledge, it is a measure of protection and defence, due to them and to society, to instruct them well. The next letter was as follows:

'My dear Sir,

'I have taken a folio sheet to make certain minutes upon the subject of EDUCATION.

. . . . . .

'As a Christian preacher your business is with man as an immortal being. Let us imagine you to be addressing those, and those only, who would gladly co-operate with you in any course of education which is most likely to ensure to men a happy immortality. Are you satisfied with that course which the most active of this class are bent upon? Clearly not, as I remember from your conversation, which is confirmed by your last letter. Great principles, you hold, are sacrificed to shifts and expedients. I agree with you. What more sacred law of nature, for instance, than that the mother should educate her child? yet we felicitate ourselves upon the establishment of infant schools, which is in direct opposition to it. Nay, we interfere with the maternal instinct before the child is born, by furnishing, in cases where there is no necessity, the mother with baby-linen for her unborn child. Now, that in too many instances a lamentable necessity may exist for this, I allow; but why should such charity be obtruded? Why should so many excellent ladies form themselves into committees, and rush into an almost indiscriminate benevolence, which precludes the poor mother from the strongest motive human nature can be actuated by for industry, for forethought, and self-denial? When the stream has thus been poisoned at its fountain-head, we proceed, by separating, through infant schools, the mother from the child, and from the rest of the family, disburthening them of all care of the little one for perhaps eight hours of the day. To those who think this an evil, but a necessary one, much might be said, in order to qualify unreasonable expectations. But there are thousands of

stirring people now in England, who are so far misled as to deem these schools *good in themselves*, and to wish that, even in the smallest villages, the children of the poor should have what *they* call "a good education" in this way. Now, these people (and no error is at present more common) confound *education* with *tuition*.

'Education, I need not remark to you, is everything that *draws out* the human being, of which *tuition*, the teaching of schools especially, however important, is comparatively an insignificant part. Yet the present bent of the public mind is to sacrifice the greater power to the less — all that life and nature teach, to the little that can be learned from books and a master. In the eyes of an enlightened statesman this is absurd; in the eyes of a pure lowly-minded Christian it is monstrous.

'The Spartan and other ancient communities might disregard domestic ties, because they had the substitution of country, which we cannot have. With us, country is a mere name compared with what it was to the Greeks; first, as contrasted with barbarians; and next, and above all, as that *passion* only was strong enough to preserve the individual, his family, and the whole state, from ever-impending destruction. Our course is to supplant domestic attachments without the possibility of substituting others more capacious. What can grow out of it but selfishness?

'Let it then be universally admitted that infant schools are an evil, only tolerated to qualify a greater, viz., the inability of mothers to attend to their children, and the like inability of the elder to take care of the younger, from their labour being wanted in factories, or elsewhere, for their common support. But surely this is a sad state of society; and if these expedients of tuition or education (if that word is not to be parted with) divert our attention

from the fact that the remedy for so mighty an evil must be sought elsewhere, they are most pernicious things, and the sooner they are done away with the better.

'But even as a course of tuition, I have strong objections to infant schools; and in no small degree to the Madras system also. We must not be deceived by premature adroitness. The *intellect* must not be trained with a view to what the infant or child may perform, without constant reference to what that performance promises for the man. It is with the mind as with the body. I recollect seeing a German babe stuffed with beer and beef, who had the appearance of an infant Hercules. *He* might have enough in him of the old Teutonic blood to grow up to a strong man; but tens of thousands would dwindle and perish after such unreasonable cramming. Now I cannot but think, that the like would happen with our modern pupils, if the views of the patrons of these schools were realized. The diet they offer is not the natural diet for infant and juvenile minds. The faculties are overstrained, and not exercised with that simultaneous operation which ought to be aimed at as far as is practicable. Natural history is taught in infant schools by pictures stuck up against walls, and such mummery. A moment's notice of a red-breast pecking by a winter's hearth is worth it all.

'These hints are for the negative side of the question: and for the positive, — what conceit, and presumption, and vanity, and envy, and mortification, and hypocrisy, &c. &c., are the unavoidable result of schemes where there is so much display and contention! All this is at enmity with Christianity; and if the practice of sincere churchmen in this matter be so, what have we not to fear when we cast our eyes upon other quarters where religious instruction is deliberately excluded? The wisest of us

expect far too much from school teaching. One of the most innocent, contented, happy, and, in his sphere, most useful men whom I know, can neither read nor write. Though learning and sharpness of wit must exist somewhere, to protect, and in some points to interpret the Scriptures, yet we are told that the Founder of this religion rejoiced in spirit, that things were hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes: and again, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise." Apparently, the infants here contemplated were under a very different course of discipline from that which many in our day are condemned to. In a town of Lancashire, about nine in the morning, the streets resound with the crying of infants, wheeled off in carts and other vehicles (some ladies, I believe, lending their carriages for this purpose) to their school-prisons.

'But to go back a little. Human learning, as far as it tends to breed pride and self-estimation (and that it requires constant vigilance to counteract this tendency we must all feel), is against the spirit of the Gospel. Much cause then is there to lament that inconsiderate zeal, wherever it is found, which whets the intellect by blunting the affections. Can it, in a *general* view, be good, that an infant should learn much which its *parents do not know?* Will not the child arrogate a superiority unfavourable to love and obedience?

'But suppose this to be an evil only for the present generation, and that a succeeding race of infants will have no such advantage over their parents; still it may be asked, should we not be making these infants too much the creatures of society when we cannot make them more so? Here would they be for eight hours in the day like plants in a conservatory. What is to become of them for the other sixteen hours, when they are returned to all the

influences, the dread of which first suggested this contrivance? Will they be better able to resist the mischief they may be exposed to from the bad example of their parents, or brothers and sisters? It is to be feared not, because, though they must have heard many good precepts, their condition in school is artificial; they have been removed from the discipline and exercise of humanity, and they have, besides, been subject to many evil temptations within school and peculiar to it.

'In the present generation I cannot see anything of an harmonious co-operation between these schools and home influences. If the family be thoroughly bad, and the child cannot be removed altogether, how feeble the barrier, how futile the expedient! If the family be of middle character, the children will lose more by separation from domestic cares and reciprocal duties, than they can possibly gain from captivity with such formal instruction as may be administered.

'We are then brought round to the point, that it is to a physical and not a moral necessity that we must look, if we would justify this disregard, I had almost said violation, of a primary law of human nature. The link of eleemosynary tuition connects the infant school with the national schools upon the Madras system. Now I cannot but think that there is too much indiscriminate gratuitous instruction in this country; arising out of the misconception above adverted to, of the real power of school teaching, relatively to the discipline of life; and out of an over-value of talent, however exerted, and of knowledge prized for its own sake, and acquired in the shape of knowledge. The latter clauses of the last sentence glance rather at the London University and the Mechanics' Institutes than at the Madras schools, yet they have some bearing upon these also. Emulation, as I observed in my

last letter, is the master-spring of that system. It mingles too much with all teaching, and with all learning; but in the Madras mode it is the great wheel which puts every part of the machine into motion.

'But I have been led a little too far from gratuitous instruction. If possible, instruction ought never to be altogether so. A child will soon learn to feel a stronger love and attachment to its parents, when it perceives that they are making sacrifices for its instruction. All that precept can teach is nothing compared with convictions of this kind. In short, unless book attainments are carried on by the side of moral influences they are of no avail. Gratitude is one of the most benign of moral influences; can a child be grateful to a corporate body for its instruction? or grateful even to the Lady Bountiful of the neighbourhood, with all the splendour which he sees about her, as he would be grateful to his poor father and mother, who spare from their scanty provision a mite for the culture of his mind at school? If we look back upon the progress of things in this country since the Reformation, we shall find, that instruction has never been severed from moral influences and purposes, and the natural action of circumstances, in the way that is now attempted. Our forefathers established, in abundance, free grammar schools; but for a distinctly understood religious purpose. They were designed to provide against a relapse of the nation into Popery, by diffusing a knowledge of the languages in which the Scriptures are written, so that a sufficient number might be aware how small a portion of the popish belief had a foundation in Holy Writ.

'It is undoubtedly to be desired that every one should be able to read, and perhaps (for that is far from being equally apparent) to write. But you will agree with me, I think, that these attainments are likely to turn to better

account where they are not gratuitously lavished, and where either the parents and connections are possessed of certain property which enables them to procure the instruction for their children, or where, by their frugality and other serious and self-denying habits, they contribute, as far as they can, to benefit their offspring in this way. Surely, whether we look at the usefulness and happiness of the individual, or the prosperity and security of the state, this, which was the course of our ancestors, is the better course. Contrast it with that recommended by men, in whose view knowledge and intellectual adroitness are to do everything of themselves.

'We have no guarantee on the social condition of these *well* informed pupils for the use they may make of their power and their knowledge: the scheme points not to man as a religious being; its end is an unworthy one; and its means do not pay respect to the order of things. Try the Mechanics' Institutes and the London University, &c., &c., by this test. The powers are not co-ordinate with those to which this nation owes its virtue and its prosperity. Here is, in one case, a sudden formal abstraction of a vital principle, and in both an unnatural and violent pushing on. Mechanics' Institutes make discontented spirits and insubordinate and presumptuous workmen. Such at least was the opinion of Watt, one of the most experienced and intelligent of men. And instruction, where religion is expressly excluded, is little less to be dreaded than that by which it is trodden under foot. And, for my own part, I cannot look without shuddering on the array of surgical midwifery lectures, to which the youth of London were invited at the commencement of this season by the advertisements of the London University. Hogarth understood human nature better than these professors: his picture I have not seen for many long years,

but I think his last stage of cruelty is in the dissecting room.

'But I must break off, or you will have double postage to pay for this letter. Pray excuse it; and pardon the style, which is, purposely, as meagre as I could make it, for the sake of brevity. I hope that you can gather the meaning, and that is enough. I find that I have a few moments to spare, and will, therefore, address a word to those who may be inclined to ask, what is the use of all these objections? The schoolmaster is, and will remain, abroad. The thirst of knowledge is spreading and will spread, whether virtue and duty go along with it or no. Grant it; but surely these observations may be of use if they tend to check unreasonable expectations. One of the most difficult tasks is to keep benevolence in alliance with beneficence. Of the former there is no want, but we do not see our way to the latter. Tenderness of heart is indispensable for a good man, but a certain sternness of heart is as needful for a wise one. We are as impatient under the evils of society as under our own, and more so; for in the latter case, necessity enforces submission. It is hard to look upon the condition in which so many of our fellow-creatures are born, but they are not to be raised from it by partial and temporary expedients: it is not enough to rush headlong into any new scheme that may be proposed, be it Benefit Societies, Savings' Banks, Infant Schools, Mechanic Institutes, or any other. Circumstances have forced this nation to do, by its manufacturers, an undue portion of the dirty and unwholesome work of the globe. The revolutions among which we have lived have unsettled the value of all kinds of property, and of labour, the most precious of all, to that degree, that misery and privation are frightfully prevalent. We must bear the sight of this, and endure its pressure, till we have

by reflection discovered the cause, and not till then can we hope even to palliate the evil. It is a thousand to one but that the means resorted to will aggravate it.

'Farewell, ever affectionately yours,

'W. WORDSWORTH.

'*Quere.* — Is the education in the parish schools of Scotland gratuitous, or if not, in what degree is it so?'

This letter may be followed by a few lines, addressed by Mr. Wordsworth to his brother, the late Master of Trinity, on the same subject.

To the Rev. Dr. Wordsworth.

'*Rydal Mount, April* 27, 1830.

'My dear Brother,

'Was Mr. Rose's course of sermons upon education? The more I reflect upon the subject, the more I am convinced that positive instruction, even of a religious character, is much over-rated. The education of man, and above all of a Christian, is the education of *duty*, which is most forcibly taught by the business and concerns of life, of which, even for children, especially the children of the poor, book-learning is but a small part. There is an officious disposition on the part of the upper and middle classes to precipitate the tendency of the people towards intellectual culture in a manner subversive of their own happiness, and dangerous to the peace of society. It is mournful to observe of how little avail are lessons of piety taught at school, if household attentions and obligations be neglected in consequence of the time taken up in school tuition, and if the head be stuffed with

vanity from the gentlemanliness of the employment of reading. Farewell.

'W. W.'

His apprehensions with respect to the tendencies of modern systems of tuition are expressed in the following lines, written in or about 1837.

'The Stream [of Time]
Has to our generation brought and brings
Innumerable gains; yet we, who now
Walk in the light of day, pertain full surely
To a chilled age, most pitiably shut out
From that which *is* and actuates, by forms,
Abstractions, and by lifeless fact to fact
Minutely linked with diligence uninspired,
Unrectified, unguided, unsustained,
By godlike insight. To this fate is doomed
Science, wide-spread and spreading still as be
Her conquests, in the world of sense made known.
So with the internal mind it fares; and so
With morals, trusting, in contempt or fear
Of vital principle's controlling law,
To her purblind guide Expediency; and so
Suffers religious Faith. Elate with view
Of what is won, we overlook or scorn
The best that should keep pace with it, and must,
Else more and more the general mind will droop,
Even as if bent on perishing. There lives
No faculty within us which the Soul
Can spare, and humblest earthly Weal demands,
For dignity not placed beyond her reach,
Zealous co-operation of all means
Given or acquired, to raise us from the mire,
And liberate our hearts from low pursuits.
By gross Utilities enslaved we need
More of ennobling impulse from the past,
If to the future aught of good must come
Sounder and therefore holier than the ends

Which, in the giddiness of self-applause,
We covet as supreme. O grant the crown
That Wisdom wears, or take his treacherous staff
From Knowledge!'[1]

In connection with the subject of education, it may be relevant to introduce a speech delivered[2] by Mr. Wordsworth, one of the few specimens in existence of his oratorical powers,* on the occasion of laying the first

[1] Musings near Aquapendente, vol. iii. p. 152.

[2] This Report is the 'substance of what Mr. Wordsworth desired to convey to his hearers,' and was 'furnished by himself.' I am indebted for it to the Rev. R. P. Graves, of Windermere, under whose excellent direction the arrangements of the day were conducted.

* [See 'Life and Correspondence' of Southey for an account given by Dr. Mackenzie of a specimen of Wordsworth's *argumentative* powers exercised in public. In 1836, at the assizes at Lancaster, an important will case turned upon the character of certain letters purporting to have been written by the testator; and Wordsworth, Southey, Dr. Lingard, the historian, Dr. Mackenzie and other literary men were subpœnaed to give opinion on this subject. Dr. Mackenzie describes Wordsworth's opinion as given at 'a board of law':

'At our meeting on the preceding evening, Mr. Wordsworth gave his opinion of the letters to this effect, judging from external as well as internal evidence, that though they came from one hand, they did not emanate from one and the same mind; that a man commencing to write letters might do so very badly, but as he advanced in life, particularly if he wrote many letters, he would probably improve in style; such improvement being constant and not capricious. That is, if he gradually learned to spell and write properly, he would not fall back at intervals into his original errors of composition and spelling — that if once he had got out of his ignorance he could not fall back into it, except by design — that the human mind advances, but cannot recede, unless warped by insanity or weakened by disease. The conclusion arrived at, which facts afterwards proved, was, that the ine-

stone of new schools at Bowness, Windermere, on Wednesday, April 13, 1836; a rainy day.

Mr. Wordsworth took part in that ceremony as the representative of the founder of those schools, JOHN BOLTON, Esq. of Storrs, who had then completed his eightieth year.

'Standing here as Mr. Bolton's substitute, at his own request, an honour of which I am truly sensible, it gives me peculiar pleasure to see, in spite of this stormy weather, so numerous a company of his friends and neighbours upon this occasion. How happy would it have made him to have been eye-witness of an assemblage which may fairly be regarded as a proof of the interest felt in his benevolent undertaking, and an earnest that the good work will not be done in vain. Sure I am, also, that there is no one present who does not deeply regret the cause why that excellent man cannot appear among us. The public spirit of Mr. Bolton has ever been remarkable, both for its comprehensiveness and the judicious way in which it has been exerted. Many years ago, when we were threatened with foreign invasion, he equipped and headed a body of volunteers for the defence of our country. Not

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quality in the letters arose from their being composed by different persons, some ignorant and some well-informed, while another person always copied them fairly for the post.

'This is the sum of what Mr. Wordsworth at great length and very elaborately declared as the result he had arrived at. It was thought piled on thought, clear investigation, careful analysis, and accumulative reasoning. — While Wordsworth was speaking, I noticed that Southey listened with great attention.'

Southey writing to Mr. Henry Taylor, says — 'Wordsworth is now a "Sworn Critic and Appraiser of Composition;" and he has the whole honour to himself, — an honour, I believe, of which there is no other example in literary history.' Vol. VI. Chap. XXXVI. p. 297 - 300. — H. R.]

long since, the inhabitants of Ulverston (his native place I believe) were indebted to him for a large contribution towards erecting a church in that town. His recent munificent donations to the public charities of Liverpool are well known; and I only echo the sentiments of this meeting when I say that every one would have rejoiced to see a gentleman (who has completed his eightieth year) taking the lead in this day's proceedings, for which there would have been no call, but for his desire permanently to benefit a district in which he has so long been a resident proprietor. It may be gathered from old documents, that, upwards of 200 years ago, this place was provided with a school, which early in the reign of Charles II. was *endowed* by the liberality of certain persons of the neighbourhood. The building, originally small and low, has long been in a state which rendered the erection of a new one very desirable; this Mr. Bolton has undertaken to do at his sole expense. The structure, which is to supersede the old school-house, will have two apartments, airy, spacious and lofty, one for boys, the other for girls; in which they will be instructed by respective teachers, and not crowded together as in the old school-room, under one and the same person: each room will be capable of containing, at least, 100 children. Within the enclosure there will be spacious and separate play-grounds for the boys and girls, with distinct covered sheds to play in in wet weather. There will also be a library-room for the school, and containing books for the benefit of the neighbourhood; and, in short, every arrangement that could be desired. It may be added, that the building, from the elegance of its architecture, and its elevated, spacious situation, will prove a striking ornament to the beautiful country in the midst of which it will stand. Such being the advantages proposed, allow me to express a hope that they will be turned

to the best possible account. The privilege of the school being free, will not, I trust, tempt parents to withdraw their children from punctual attendance, upon slight and trivial occasions; and they will take care, as far as depends upon themselves, that the wishes of the present benefactor may be met and his intentions fulfilled. Those wishes and intentions I will take upon me to say, are consonant to what has been expressed in the original trust-deed of the pious and sensible men already spoken of, who in that instrument declare, that they have provided a fund "towards the finding and maintenance of an able schoolmaster, and repairing the school-house from time to time, for ever; for teaching and instructing of youth within the said hamlets, in grammar, writing, reading, and other good learning and discipline meet and convenient for them; for the honour of God, for the better advancement and preferment of the said youth, and to the perpetual and thankful remembrance of the founders and authors of so good a work." The effect of this beautiful summary upon your minds will not, I hope, be weakened if I make a brief comment upon the several clauses of it, which will comprise nearly the whole of what I feel prompted to say upon this occasion. I will take the liberty, however, of inverting the order in which the purposes of these good men are mentioned, beginning at what they end with. "*The perpetual and thankful remembrance of the founders and authors of so good a work.*" Do not let it be supposed that your forefathers, when they looked onwards to this issue, did so from vanity and love of applause, uniting with local attachment; they wished their good works to be remembered principally because they were conscious that such remembrance would be beneficial to the hearts of those whom they desired to serve, and would effectually promote the particular good

they had in view. Let me add *for* them, what their modesty and humility would have prevented their insisting upon, that such tribute of grateful recollection was, and is still their *due;* for if gratitude be not the most perfect shape of justice, it is assuredly her most beautiful crown, — a halo and glory with which she delights to have her brows encircled. So much of this gratitude as those good men hoped for, I may bespeak for your neighbour, who is now animated by the same spirit, and treading in their steps. The second point to which I shall advert is, that where it is said that such and such things shall be taught "*for the better advancement and preferment of the said youth.*" This purpose is as honourable as it is natural, and recalls to remembrance the time when the northern counties had, in this particular, great advantages over the rest of England. By the zealous care of many pious and good men, among whom I cannot but name (from his connection with this neighbourhood, and the benefits he conferred upon it) Archbishop Sandys, free schools were founded in these parts of the kingdom in much greater numbers than elsewhere. The learned professions derived many ornaments from this source; but a more remarkable consequence was, that, till within the last forty years or so, merchants' counting-houses, and offices, in the lower departments of which a certain degree of scholastic attainment was requisite, were supplied in a great measure from Cumberland and Westmoreland. Numerous and large fortunes were the result of the skill, industry, and integrity, which the young men thus instructed carried with them to the metropolis. That superiority no longer exists; not so much, I trust, from a slackening on the part of the teachers, or an indisposition of the inhabitants to profit by their free schools, but because the kingdom at large has become sensible of the

advantages of school instruction; and we of the north consequently have competitors from every quarter. Let not this discourage, but rather stimulate us to more strenuous endeavours; so that if we do not keep ahead of the rest of our countrymen, we may at least take care not to be left behind in the race of honourable ambition. But, after all, worldly advancement and preferment neither are nor ought to be the *main* end of instruction, either in schools or elsewhere, and particularly in those which are in rural places and scantily endowed. It is in the order of Providence, as we are all aware, that *most* men must end their temporal course pretty much as they began it; nor will the thoughtful repine at this dispensation. In lands where nature in the many is not trampled upon by injustice, feelingly may the peasant say to the courtier,

> "The sun, that bids your diamond blaze,
> To deck our lily deigns."

Contentment, according to the common adage, is better than riches: and why is it better? Not merely because there can be no happiness without it, but for the sake, also, of its moral dignity. Mankind, we know, are placed on earth to have their hearts and understandings exercised and improved, some in one sphere, and some in another, — to undergo various trials, and to perform divers duties; *that* duty which, in the world's estimation, may seem the least, often being the most important in the eyes of our heavenly Father. Well and wisely has it been said, in words which I need not scruple to quote here, where extreme poverty and abject misery are unknown:

> "God doth not need
> Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
> Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best; his state
> Is kingly — thousands at his bidding speed

And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

Thus am I naturally led to the third and last point in the declaration of the ancient trust-deed, which I mean to touch upon: "*Youth shall be instructed in grammar, writing, reading, and other good discipline, meet and convenient for them, for the honour of God.*" Now, my friends and neighbours, much as we must admire the zeal and activity which have of late years been shown in the teaching of youth, I will candidly ask those among you, who have had sufficient opportunities to observe, whether the instruction given in many schools *is*, in fact, *meet and convenient*. In the building about to be erected here, I have not the smallest reason for dreading that it will be otherwise. But I speak in the hearing of persons who may be active in the management of schools elsewhere; and they will excuse me for saying, that many are conducted at present so as to afford melancholy proof that instruction is neither *meet nor convenient* for the pupils there taught, nor, indeed, for the human mind in any rank or condition of society. I am not going to say that religious instruction, the most important of all, is neglected; far from it: but I affirm, that it is too often given with reference, less to the affections, to the imagination, and to the practical duties, than to subtle distinctions in points of doctrine, and to facts in scripture history, of which a knowledge may be brought out by a catechetical process. This error, great though it be, ought to be looked at with indulgence, because it is a tempting thing for teachers unduly to exercise the understanding and memory, inasmuch as progress in the departments in which these faculties are employed, is thus most obviously proved to the teacher himself, and most flatteringly exhibited to the inspectors of schools and casual lookers-on. A still more

lamentable error, which proceeds much from the same cause, is an overstrained application to mental processes of arithmetic and mathematics, and a too minute attention to departments of natural and civil history. How much of trick may mix with this we will not ask; but the display of precocious intellectual power in these branches is often astonishing; and, in proportion as it is so, may, for the most part, be pronounced not only useless, but injurious. The training that fits a boxer for victory in the ring, gives him strength that cannot, and is not required, to be kept up for ordinary labour, and often lays the foundation of subsequent weakness and fatal disease. In like manner, there being in after life no call for these extraordinary powers of mind, and little use for the knowledge, the powers decay, and the knowledge withers and drops off. Here is then not only a positive injury, but a loss of opportunities for culture of intellect and acquiring information, which, as being in a course of regular demand, would be hereafter, the one strengthened and the other naturally increased. All this mischief, my friends, originates in a decay of that feeling which our fathers had uppermost in their hearts, viz., that the business of education should be conducted for *the honour of God.* And here I must direct your attention to a fundamental mistake, by which this age, so distinguished for its marvellous progress in arts and sciences, is unhappily characterized — a mistake, manifested in the use of the word *education*, which is habitually confounded with *tuition*, or school instruction; this is indeed a very important part of education, but when it is taken for the whole, we are deceived and betrayed. Education, according to the derivation of the word, and in the only use of which it is strictly justifiable, comprehends all those processes and influences, come from whence they may, that conduce to the best

development of the bodily powers, and of the moral, intellectual, and spiritual faculties which the position of the individual admits of. In this just and high sense of the word, the education of a sincere Christian, and a good member of society upon Christian principles, does not terminate with his youth, but goes on to the last moment of his conscious earthly existence — an education not for time but for eternity. To education like this is indispensably necessary, as co-operating with schoolmasters and ministers of the gospel, the never-ceasing vigilance of parents; not so much exercised in superadding their pains to that of the schoolmaster or minister in teaching lessons or catechisms, or by enforcing maxims or precepts (though this part of their duty ought to be habitually kept in mind), but by care over their *own* conduct. It is through the silent operation of example in their own well-regulated behaviour, and by accustoming their children early to the discipline of daily and hourly life, in such offices and employment as the situation of the family requires, and as are suitable to tender years, that parents become infinitely the most important tutors of their children, without appearing, or positively meaning, to be so. This education of circumstances has happily, in this district, not yet been much infringed upon by experimental novelties; parents here are anxious to send their offspring to those schools where knowledge substantially useful is inculcated, and those arts most carefully taught for which in after life there will be most need; this is especially true of the judgments of parents respecting the instruction of their daughters, which *I know* they would wish to be confined to reading, writing, and arithmetic, and plain needlework, or any other art favourable to economy and home-comforts. Their shrewd sense perceives that hands full of employment, and a head not above it, afford the best protection

against restlessness and discontent, and all the perilous temptations to which, through them, youthful females are exposed. It is related of Burns, the celebrated Scottish poet, that once, while in the company of a friend, he was looking from an eminence over a wide tract of country, he said that the sight of so many smoking cottages gave a pleasure to his mind that none could understand who had not witnessed, like himself, the happiness and worth which they contained. How were those *happy* and *worthy* people educated? By the influence of hereditary good example at home, and by their parochial schoolmasters opening the way for the admonitions and exhortations of their clergy; that was at a time when knowledge was, perhaps, better than now distinguished from smatterings of information, and when knowledge was more thought of in due subordination to wisdom. How was the evening before the sabbath then spent by the families among which the Poet was brought up? He has himself told us in imperishable verse. The Bible was brought forth, and after the father of the family had reverently laid aside his bonnet, passages of Scripture were read; and the Poet thus describes what followed:

"Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays;
Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing,
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear;
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere."

May He who enlightened the understanding of those cottagers with a knowledge of himself for the entertainment of such hope, "who sanctified their affections that they

might love Him, and put His fear into their hearts that they might dread to offend Him" — may He who, in preparing for these blessed effects, disdained not the humble instrumentality of parochial schools, enable this of ours, by the discipline and teaching pursued in it, to sow seeds for a like harvest! In this wish I am sure, my friends, you will all fervently join. And now, after renewing our expression of regret that the benevolent founder is not here to perform the ceremony himself, we will proceed to lay the first stone of the intended edifice.'

[In connection with the subject of this chapter, the following sonnet, addressed to the author of these 'Memoirs,' then holding a different official station, may be appropriately appended here:

'To the Rev. Christopher Wordsworth, D. D., Master of Harrow School, after the perusal of his "*Theophilus Anglicanus*," recently published.

Enlightened Teacher, gladly from thy hand
Have I received this proof of pains bestowed
By thee, to guide thy pupils on the road
That, in our native isle, and every land,
The Church, when trusting in divine command
And in her catholic attributes, hath trod:
O may these lessons be with profit scanned
To thy heart's wish, thy labour blest by God!
So the bright faces of the young and gay
Shall look more bright — the happy, happier still;
Catch, in the pauses of their keenest play,
Motions of thought which elevate the will,
And, like the Spire that from your classic Hill
Points heavenward, indicate the end and way.
Rydal Mount, Dec. 11, 1843.' Vol. II. p. 316. — H. R.]

CHAPTER XLVI.

PERSONAL HISTORY, 1819 - 1830.

VARIOUS letters from Mr. Wordsworth's pen, and belonging to this period, have come into my hands. For the most part they consist of brief notices of different topics, and do not easily admit of classification according to the nature of their contents. I shall therefore select some materials from them, arranged in chronological order, for the purpose of giving a view of his literary life at this period, and of placing before the reader his opinions on matters of public and permanent interest, and also of affording specimens of his epistolary intercourse with his friends.

Let me observe here, once for all, that in making this selection I have endeavoured not to lose sight of those principles which ought to regulate the publication of such communications.

The two following are to his friend Archdeacon Wrangham.

To the Venerable Archdeacon Wrangham.

'*Rydal Mount, Feb.* 19, 1819.

'Dear Wrangham,

'I received your kind letter last night, for which you will accept my thanks. I write upon the spur of that

mark of your regard, or my aversion to letter-writing might get the better of me.

'I find it difficult to speak publicly of good men while alive, especially if they are persons who have power. The world ascribes the eulogy to interested motives, or to an adulatory spirit, which I detest. But of LORD LONSDALE, I will say to you, that I do not think there exists in England a man of any rank more anxiously desirous to discharge his duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call him. His thought and exertions are constantly directed to that object; and the more he is known, the more is he beloved and respected and admired.

'I ought to have thanked you before for your version of VIRGIL'S ECLOGUES, which reached me at last. I have lately compared it line for line with the original, and think it very well done. I was particularly pleased with the skill you have shown in managing the contest between the shepherds in the third Pastoral, where you have included in a succession of couplets the sense of Virgil's paired hexameters. I think I mentioned to you that these poems of Virgil have always delighted me much; there is frequently either an elegance and a happiness which no translation can hope to equal. In point of fidelity your translation is very good indeed.

'You astonish me with the account of your books; and I should have been still more astonished if you had told me you had read a third (shall I say a tenth part?) of them. My reading powers were never very good, and now they are much diminished, especially by candle-light; and as to *buying* books, I can affirm that in *new* books I have not spent five shillings for the last five years, *i. e.* in Reviews, Magazines, Pamphlets, &c. &c.; so that there would be an end of Mr. Longman, and Mr. Cadell, &c.

&c., if nobody had more power or inclination to buy than myself. And as to old books, my dealings in that way, for want of means, have been very trifling. Nevertheless, small and paltry as my collection is, I have not read a fifth part of it. I should, however, like to see your army.

> "Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
> When Agrican, with all his *northern* powers,
> Besieged Albracca, as *romances* tell."

Not that I accuse you of romancing; I verily believe that you have all the books you speak of. Dear Wrangham, are you and I ever like to meet in this world again? *Yours* is a *corner* of the earth; *mine* is *not* so. I never heard of anybody going to Bridlington; but all the world comes to the Lakes. Farewell. Excuse this wretched scrawl: it is like all that proceeds from my miserable pen.

. . . . . .

'Ever faithfully yours,
'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

'Dear Wrangham,

'You are very good in sending one letter after another to inquire after a person so undeserving of attentions of this kind as myself. Dr. Johnson, I think, observes, or rather is made to observe by some of his biographers, that no man delights to *give* what he is accustomed to *sell*. "For example: you, Mr. Thrale, would rather part with anything in this way than your porter." Now, though I have never been much of a salesman in matters of literature (the whole of my returns — I do not say *net profits*, but *returns* — from the writing trade not amounting to seven score pounds), yet, somehow or other, I manu-

facture a letter, and part with it, as reluctantly as if it were really a thing of price. But, to drop the comparison, I have so much to do with writing, in the way of labour and profession, that it is difficult to me to conceive how anybody can take up a pen but from constraint. My writing-desk is to me a place of punishment; and, as my penmanship sufficiently testifies, I always bend over it with some degree of impatience. All this is said that you may know the real cause of my silence, and not ascribe it in any degree to slight or forgetfulness on my part, or an insensibility to your worth and the value of your friendship. . . . . As to my occupations, they look little at the present age; but I live in hope of leaving something behind me that by some minds will be valued.

'I see no new books except by the merest accident. Of course your poem, which I should have been pleased to read, has not found its way to me. You inquire about old books: you might almost as well have asked for my teeth as for any of mine. The only *modern* books that I read are those of Travels, or such as relate to matters of fact; and the only modern books that I care for; but as to old ones, I am like yourself — scarcely anything comes amiss to me. The little time I have to spare — the very little, I may say — all goes that way. If, however, in the *line of your profession* you want any bulky old Commentaries on the Scriptures (such as not twelve strong men of these degenerate days will venture — I do not say to *read*, but to *lift*), I can, perhaps, as a special favour, accommodate you.

'I and mine will be happy to see you and yours here or anywhere; but I am sorry the time you talk of is so distant: a year and a half is a long time looking forwards, though, looking back, ten times as much is brief as a

dream. My writing is wholly illegible — at least I fear so; I had better, therefore, release you.

'Believe me, my dear Wrangham,

'Your affectionate friend,

'W. WORDSWORTH.'

The following letter from Dr. Satterthwaite, rector of Lowther, to his friend Dr. Wordsworth, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, describes a serious and alarming accident which befel the Poet in the spring of 1822.

'*Lowther*, *May* 21, 1822.

'My dear Wordsworth,

'To prevent, if possible, any exaggerated account reaching you of an accident which happened to your brother William on Monday afternoon, I have been desired by him and Mrs. Wordsworth to state to you the real state of the case. On that day, about noon, when in company with Messrs. Monkhouse and George, on their road to Haweswater, he was thrown from his horse, and received, apparently, a very severe injury on his head. He was brought, as soon as possible, to my house; and Dr. Harrison, upon examination of the wound, pronounced the skull to be fractured. We have now every reason to hope that the roughness of bone perceptible to the touch at the bottom of the wound has been only abrasion by the sharp-pointed stone against which he was thrown. The wound was full two inches long, and to us appeared very deep and frightful. Most happy am I to tell you that no unpleasant consequences whatsoever have followed. He has had no fever, headache, or stupor — not one unpleasant sensation of any kind; has passed two very comfortable nights, and rested well; and we now entertain the most confident hope that a very short time will restore this

invaluable man to us in the full possession of his former health and powers of usefulness. We lost no time in sending for Mrs. W., who, with her daughter, arrived next morning before day-break. You may, I assure you, rest satisfied that he is going on in a way to meet the most *anxious* wishes of his most *timorous* friends; and, with the advantages of the quiet lodging and excellent nursing he enjoys, no reasonable apprehension can be entertained about the result. The wound is nearly healed. We continue to send your sister daily information of our progress; and now that the first shock is got over, we are all gradually returning to a state of tranquillity.

'It is singular enough that on Monday morning I had determined to write to you to offer myself as an inmate at Trinity Lodge for a couple of nights, on the 28th and 29th, intending to preach at St. Mary's on the latter day. This accident, overwhelming as it at first appeared, led me to write to Dr. French to beg he would procure me a deputy; for you may be quite sure I would not think of leaving such a friend and such a man in my own house till I could leave him without a particle of apprehension.

'They all, your brother, sister, and niece, with Monkhouse and George, join in kindest remembrances to you; and

'Believe me very affectionately yours,

'JAS. SATTERTHWAITE.'

The rapidity of Mr. Wordsworth's convalescence surprised his friends; it was owing, humanly speaking, to his very temperate habits. To the same cause it may be ascribed, that during his long life he was scarcely ever confined to the house by so much as a day's illness.

The next letter, containing some judicious advice, is

addressed to Mr. Edward Moxon, afterwards the respected publisher of Mr. Wordsworth's works.

(*Postmark*) '*Dec.* 8, 1826.

'Dear Sir,

'It is some time since I received your little volume, for which I now return you my thanks, and also for the obliging letter that accompanied it.

'Your poem I have read with no inconsiderable pleasure; it is full of natural sentiments and pleasing pictures: among the minor pieces, the last pleased me much the best, and especially the latter part of it. This little volume, with what I saw of yourself during a short interview, interests me in your welfare; and the more so, as I always feel some apprehension for the destiny of those who in youth addict themselves to the composition of verse. It is a very seducing employment, and, though begun in disinterested love of the Muses, is too apt to connect itself with self-love, and the disquieting passions which follow in the train of that our natural infirmity. Fix your eye upon acquiring independence by honourable business, and let the Muses come after rather than go before. Such lines as the latter of this couplet,

> "Where lovely woman, chaste as heaven above,
> Shines in the golden virtues of her love,"

and many other passages in your poem, give proof of no common-place sensibility. I am therefore the more earnest that you should guard yourself against this temptation.

'Excuse this freedom; and believe me, my dear Sir, very faithfully,

'Your obliged servant,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

The next is to Professor W. R. Hamilton (now Sir William R. Hamilton), on the receipt of some poems of his own and his sister's composition.

To W. R. Hamilton, Esq., Observatory, near Dublin.

'*Rydal Mount, near Kendal, Sept.* 24, 1827.

'My dear Sir,

'You will have no pain to suffer from my sincerity. With a safe conscience I can assure you that in my judgment your verses are animated with true poetic spirit, as they are evidently the product of strong feeling. The sixth and seventh stanzas affected me much, even to the dimming of my eye and faltering of my voice while I was reading them aloud.

. . . . . .

'The *logical faculty* has infinitely more to do with poetry than the young and the inexperienced, whether writer or critic, ever dreams of. Indeed, as the materials upon which that faculty is exercised in poetry are so subtle, so plastic, so complex, the application of it requires an adroitness which can proceed from nothing but practice, a discernment which *emotion* is so far from bestowing that at first it is ever in the way of it. Here I must stop: only let me advert to two lines:

> "But shall despondence therefore *blench* my *brow*,
> Or pining sorrow sickly ardor o'er."

These are two of the worst lines in mere expression. "Blench" is perhaps miswritten for "blanch;" if not, I don't understand the word. *Blench* signifies to flinch. If "blanch" be the word, the next ought to be "*hair*." You can't here use *brow* for the *hair* upon it, because a

white brow or forehead is a beautiful characteristic of youth. "Sickly ardor o'er" was at first reading to me unintelligible. I took "sickly" to be an adjective joined with "ardor," whereas you mean it as a portion of a verb, from Shakspeare, "Sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." But the separation of the parts or decomposition of the word, as here done, is not to be endured.

'Let me now come to your sister's verses, for which I thank you. They are surprisingly vigorous for a female pen, but occasionally too rugged, and especially for such a subject; they have also the same faults in expression as your own, but not, I think, in quite an equal degree. Much is to be hoped from feelings so strong, and from a mind thus disposed. I should have entered into particulars with these also, had I seen you after they came into my hands. Your sister is, no doubt, aware that in her poem she has trodden the same ground as Gray, in his "Ode upon a distant Prospect of Eton College." What he has been contented to treat in the abstract, she has represented in particular, and with admirable spirit. But again, my dear Sir, let me exhort you (and do you exhort your sister) to deal little with modern writers, but fix your attention almost exclusively upon those who have stood the test of time.

'W. W.'

The next is to the Rev. Alexander Dyce, the learned editor of the works of Collins, &c., and of Ancient English Dramatists, and of various other standard writings, both in verse and prose. 'Without flattery,' writes Mr. Wordsworth to him, 'I may say that your editorial diligence and judgment entitle you to the highest praise.'

'*Rydal Mount, Kendal, Jan.* 12, 1829.

'Dear Sir,

'I regret to hear of the indisposition from which you have been suffering.

'That you are convinced[1] gives me great pleasure, as I hope that every other editor of Collins will follow your example. You are at perfect liberty to declare that you have rejected Bell's copy in consequence of my opinion of it; and I feel much satisfaction in being the instrument of rescuing the memory of Collins from this disgrace. I have always felt some concern that Mr. Home, who lived several years after Bell's publication, did not testify more regard for his deceased friend's memory by protesting against this imposition. Mr. Mackenzie is still living; and I shall shortly have his opinion upon the question; and if it be at all interesting, I shall take the liberty of sending it to you.

'Dyer is another of our minor poets — minor as to quantity — of whom one would wish to know more. Particulars about him might still be collected, I should think, in South Wales, his native country, and where in early life he practised as a painter. I have often heard Sir George Beaumont express a curiosity about his pictures, and a wish to see any specimen of his pencil that might survive. If you are a rambler, perhaps you may, at some time or other, be led into Carmarthenshire, and might bear in mind what I have just said of this excellent author.

'I had once a hope to have learned some unknown par-

[1] *i. e.* convinced by what Mr. Wordsworth had remarked to me, that those portions of Collins's 'Ode on the Superstitions of the Highlanders,' which first appeared in Bell's edition of that Ode, were forgeries. — *A. D.*

ticulars of Thomson, about Jedburgh, but I was disappointed. Had I succeeded, I meant to publish a short life of him, prefixed to a volume containing "The Seasons," "The Castle of Indolence," his minor pieces in rhyme, and a few extracts from his plays, and his "Liberty;" and I feel still inclined to do something of the kind. These three writers, Thomson, Collins, and Dyer, had more poetic imagination than any of their contemporaries, unless we reckon Chatterton as of that age. I do not name Pope, for he stands alone, as a man most highly gifted; but unluckily he took the plain when the heights were within his reach.

'Excuse this long letter, and believe me

'Sincerely yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

The following is to Professor Hamilton.

To Professor Hamilton, Observatory, Dublin.

'*Rydal Mount, July* 24, 1829.

'My dear Sir,

'It is time to thank you for the verses you so obligingly sent to me.

'Your sister's have abundance of spirit and feeling; all that they want is what appears in itself of little moment, and yet is of incalculably great, — that is, workmanship, — the art by which the thoughts are made to melt into each other, and to fall into light and shadow, regulated by distinct preconception of the best general effect they are capable of producing. This may seem very vague to you, but by conversation I think I could make it appear otherwise. It is enough for the present to say that I was much gratified, and beg you would thank your sister for

favouring me with the sight of compositions so distinctly marked with that quality which is the subject of them.[1] Your own verses are to me very interesting, and affect me much as evidences of high and pure-mindedness, from which humble-mindedness is inseparable. I like to see and think of you among the stars, and between death and immortality, where three of these poems place you. The "Dream of Chivalry" is also interesting in another way; but it would be insincere not to say that something of a style more terse, and a harmony more accurately balanced, must be acquired before the bodily form of your verses will be quite worthy of their living souls. You are probably aware of this, though perhaps not in an equal degree with myself; nor is it desirable you should, for it might tempt you to labour, which would divert you from subjects of infinitely greater importance.

'Many thanks for your interesting account of Mr. Edgeworth. I heartily concur with you in the wish that neither Plato nor any other profane author may lead him from the truths of the Gospel, without which our existence is an insupportable mystery to the thinking mind.

'Looking for a reply at your early convenience,

'I remain, my dear Sir,

'Faithfully, your obliged

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

The next is to Mr. George Huntly Gordon, of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

To G. Huntly Gordon, Esq.

'*Rydal Mount, July* 29, 1829.

'My dear Sir,

'I hope you have enjoyed yourself in the country, as

[1] Genius.

we have been doing among our shady woods, and green hills, and invigorated streams. The summer is passing on, and I have not left home, and perhaps shall not; for it is far more from duty than inclination that I quit my dear and beautiful home; and duty pulls two ways. On the one side my mind stands in need of being fed by new objects for meditation and reflection, the more so because diseased eyes have cut me off so much from reading; and, on the other hand, I am obliged to look at the expense of distant travelling, as I am not able to take so much out of my body by walking as heretofore.

'I have not got my MS. back from the ——,[1] whose managers have, between them, used me shamefully; but my complaint is principally of the editor, for with the proprietor I have had little direct connection. If you think it worth while, you shall, at some future day, see such parts of the correspondence as I have preserved. Mr. Southey is pretty much in the same predicament with them, though he has kept silence for the present. . . . I am properly served for having had any connection with such things. My only excuse is, that they offered me a very liberal sum, and that I have laboured hard through a long life, without more pecuniary emolument than a lawyer gets for two special retainers, or a public performer sometimes for two or three songs. Farewell; pray let me hear from you at your early convenience,

'And believe me faithfully your

'Much obliged

'Wm. Wordsworth.'

Soon after he thus writes to Mr. Dyce:

[1] An Annual, to which Mr. Wordsworth had been induced to become a contributor.

'*Rydal Mount, Kendal, Oct.* 16, 1829.

'My dear Sir,

'On my return from Ireland, where I have been travelling a few weeks, I found your present of George Peele's works, and the obliging letter accompanying it; for both of which I offer my cordial thanks.

'English literature is greatly indebted to your labours; and I have much pleasure in this occasion of testifying my respect for the sound judgment and conscientious diligence with which you discharge your duty as an editor. Peele's works were well deserving of the care you have bestowed upon them; and, as I did not previously possess a copy of any part of them, the beautiful book which you have sent me was very acceptable.

'By accident, I learned lately that you had made a Book of Extracts, which I had long wished for opportunity and industry to execute myself. I am happy it has fallen into so much better hands. I allude to your Selections from the Poetry of English Ladies. I had only a glance at your work; but I will take this opportunity of saying, that should a second edition be called for, I should be pleased with the honour of being consulted by you about it. There is one poetess to whose writings I am especially partial, the Countess of Winchelsea. I have perused her poems frequently, and should be happy to name such passages as I think most characteristic of her genius, and most fit to be selected.*

'I know not what to say about my intended edition of a portion of Thomson. There appears to be some indel-

* ['POEMS on Several Occasions, Written by the Right Honourable ANNE, Countess of Winchelsea. London, 1714.' She was daughter of Sir Wm. Kingsmill, and wife of Heneage, fourth Earl of Winchelsea: she died in 1720.—H. R.]

icacy in one poet treating another in that way. The example is not good, though I think there are few to whom the process might be more advantageously applied than to Thomson. Yet, so sensible am I of the objection, that I should not have entertained the thought, but for the expectation held out to me by an acquaintance, that valuable materials for a new Life of Thomson might be procured. In this I was disappointed.

. . . . . .

'With much respect, I remain, dear Sir,

'Sincerely yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

To this the following may serve as a Postscript:

'*Rydal Mount, Kendal, May* 10, 1830.

'My dear Sir,

'My last was, for want of room, concluded so abruptly, that I avail myself of an opportunity of sending you a few additional words free of postage, upon the same subject.

'I observed that Lady Winchelsea was unfortunate in her models — Pindarics and Fables; nor does it appear from her "Aristomenes" that she would have been more successful than her contemporaries, if she had cultivated tragedy. She had sensibility sufficient for the tender parts of dramatic writing, but in the stormy and tumultuous she would probably have failed altogether. She seems to have made it a moral and religious duty to control her feelings lest they should mislead her. Of love, as a passion, she is afraid, no doubt from a conscious inability to soften it down into friendship. I have often applied two lines of her drama (p. 318,) to her affections:

"Love's soft bands,
His gentle cords of hyacinths and roses,
Wove in the dewy spring when storms are silent."

By the by, in the next page are two impassioned lines spoken to a person fainting:

"Thus let me hug and press thee into life,
And lend thee motion from my beating heart."

From the style and versification of this, so much her longest work, I conjecture that Lady Winchelsea had but a slender acquaintance with the drama of the earlier part of the preceding century. Yet her style in rhyme is often admirable, chaste, tender, and vigorous, and entirely free from sparkle, antithesis, and that overculture, which reminds one, by its broad glare, its stiffness, and heaviness, of the double daisies of the garden, compared with their modest and sensitive kindred of the fields. Perhaps I am mistaken, but I think there is a good deal of resemblance in her style and versification to that of Tickell, to whom Dr. Johnson justly assigns a high place among the minor poets, and of whom Goldsmith rightly observes, that there is a strain of ballad thinking through all his poetry, and it is very attractive. Pope, in that production of his boyhood, the "Ode to Solitude," and in his "Essay on Criticism," has furnished proofs that at one period of his life he felt the charm of a sober and subdued style, which he afterwards abandoned for one that is, to my taste at least, too pointed and ambitious, and for a versification too timidly balanced.

'If a second edition of your "Specimens" should be called for, you might add from Helen Maria Williams the "Sonnet to the Moon," and that to "Twilight;" and a few more from Charlotte Smith, particularly,

"I love thee, mournful, sober-suited Night."

At the close of a sonnet of Miss Seward are two fine verses:

> "Come, that I may not hear the winds of night,
> Nor count the heavy eve-drops as they fall."

'You have well characterized the poetic powers of this lady; but, after all, her verses please me, with all their faults, better than those of Mrs. Barbauld, who, with much higher powers of mind, was spoiled as a poetess by being a dissenter, and concerned with a dissenting academy. One of the most pleasing passages in her poetry is the close of the lines upon "Life," written, I believe, when she was not less than eighty years of age:

> "Life, we have been long together," &c.[1]

You have given a specimen of that ever-to-be-pitied victim of Swift, "Vanessa." I have somewhere a short piece of hers upon her passion for Swift, which well deserves to be added. But I am becoming tedious, which you will ascribe to a well-meant endeavour to make you some return for your obliging attentions.

'I remain, dear Sir, faithfully yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

[1] It was on hearing these lines repeated by his friend, Mr. H. C. Robinson, that Mr. Wordsworth exclaimed, 'Well! I am not given to envy other people their good things; but I *do* wish I had written *that*.' * He much admired Mrs. Barbauld's Essays, and sent a copy of them, with a laudatory letter upon them, to the late Archbishop of Canterbury.

* [These lines of Mrs. Barbauld's, so much approved by Wordsworth, were composed at an age which he also lived to attain, and his praise shows that his own feelings were in sympathy with what they express. On this account I have added them, for the reader's convenience, at the end of this chapter. — H. R.]

To Charles Lamb, Esq.

'*Jan.* 10, 1830.

'My dear Lamb,

'A whole twelvemonth have I been a letter in your debt, for which fault I have been sufficiently punished by self-reproach.

'I liked your play marvellously, having no objection to to it but one, which strikes me as applicable to a large majority of plays, those of Shakspeare himself not entirely excepted — I mean a little degradation of character for a more dramatic turn of plot. Your present of Hone's book was very acceptable; and so much so, that your part of the book is the cause why I did not write long ago. I wish to enter a little minutely into notice of the dramatic extracts,* and, on account of the smallness of the print, deferred doing so till longer days would allow me to read without candle-light, which I have long since given up. But, alas! when the days lengthened, my eyesight departed, and for many months I could not read three minutes at a time. You will be sorry to hear that this infirmity still hangs about me, and almost cuts me off from reading altogether. But how are you, and how is your dear sister? I long much, as we all do, to know.

'For ourselves, this last year, owing to my sister's dangerous illness, the effects of which are not yet got over, has been an anxious one and melancholy. But no more of this. My sister has probably told everything about the

* [The dramatic extracts here spoken of are those which Charles Lamb made from the collection bequeathed by Garrick to the British Museum. The extracts appeared first as contributions to Hone's 'Table Book,' and are now included in the 'Specimens of English Dramatic Poets by Charles Lamb.' Edit. of 1835. — E. R.]

family; so that I may conclude with less scruple, by assuring you of my sincere and faithful affection for you and your dear sister.

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

In the spring of 1830, he thus expresses himself to Mr. Gordon:

To G. Huntly Gordon, Esq.

'*Rydal Mount, April* 6, 1830.

'My dear Mr. Gordon,

'You are kind in noticing with thanks my rambling notes.[1]

'We have had here a few days of delicious summer weather. It appeared with the suddenness of a pantomimic trick, stayed longer than we had a right to expect, and was as rapidly succeeded by high wind, bitter cold, and winter snow, over hill and dale.

'I am not surprised that you are so well pleased with Mr. Quillinan. The more you see of him the better you will like him. You ask what are my employments. According to Dr. Johnson they are such as entitle me to high commendation, for I am not only making two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, but a dozen. In plain language, I am draining a bit of spongy ground.[2] In the field where this goes on I am making a green terrace that commands a beautiful view of our two lakes, Rydal and Windermere, and more than two miles of intervening vale with the stream visible by glimpses flowing through it. I shall have great pleasure in showing you

[1] On a proposed tour.

[2] In the field to the S. W. below the garden at Rydal.

this among the other returns which I hope one day to make for your kindness.

'Adieu, yours,

'W. W.'

The following to Mr. Dyce was written in 1830.

[*No date, but Postmark*, 1830.]

'I am truly obliged, my dear Sir, by your valuable present of Webster's Dramatic Works and the "Specimens."[1] Your publisher was right in insisting upon the whole of Webster, otherwise the book might have been superseded, either by an entire edition separately given to the world, or in some *corpus* of the dramatic writers. The poetic genius of England, with the exception of Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Dryden, Pope, and a very few more, is to be sought in her drama. How it grieves one that there is so little probability of those valuable authors being read except by the curious! I questioned my friend Charles Lamb, whether it would answer for some person of real taste to undertake abridging the plays that are not likely to be read as wholes, and telling such parts of the story in brief abstract as were ill managed in the drama. He thought it would not. I, however, am inclined to think it would.

'The account of your indisposition gives me much concern. It pleases me, however, to see that, though you may suffer, your industry does not relax: and I hope that your pursuits are rather friendly than injurious to your health.

'You are quite correct in your notice of my obligation to Dr. Darwin.[2] In the first edition of the poem it was

[1] Specimens of British Poetesses. — *A. D.*

[2] In Mr. W.'s lines 'To Enterprise.' — *A. D.*

acknowledged in a note, which slipped out of its place in the last, along with some others. In putting together that edition, I was obliged to cut up several copies; and, as several of the poems also changed their places, some confusion and omission, and, in one instance, a repetition, was the consequence. Nothing, however, so bad as in the edition of 1820, where a long poem, "The Lament of Mary Queen of Scots," was by mistake altogether omitted. Another unpleasantness arose from the same cause; for, in some instances, notwithstanding repeated charges to the printer, you have only two Spenserian stanzas in a page (I speak now of the last edition) instead of three; and there is the same irregularity in printing other forms of stanza.

'You must indeed have been fond of that ponderous quarto, "The Excursion," to lug it about as you did.[1] In the edition of 1827 it was diligently revised, and the sense in several instances got into less room: yet still it is a long poem for these feeble and fastidious times. You would honour me much by accepting a copy of my poetical works; but I think it better to defer offering it to you till a new edition is called for, which will be ere long, as I understand the present is getting low.

'A word or two about Collins. You know what importance I attach to following strictly the last copy of the text of an author; and I do not blame you for printing in the "Ode to Evening" "brawling" spring; but surely the epithet is most unsuitable to the time, the very worst, I think, that could have been chosen.

'I now come to Lady Winchelsea. First, however, let

[1] I had mentioned to Mr. W. that, when I had a curacy in Cornwall, I used frequently to carry 'The Excursion' down to the sea-shore, and read it there.—*A. D.*

me say a few words upon one or two other authoresses of your "Specimens." British Poetesses make but a poor figure in the "Poems by Eminent Ladies."[1] But observing how injudicious that selection is in the case of Lady Winchelsea, and of Mrs. Aphra Behn (from whose attempts they are miserably copious), I have thought something better might have been chosen by more competent persons who had access to the volumes of the several writers. In selecting from Mrs. Pilkington, I regret that you omitted (look at p. 255), "Sorrow," or at least that you did not abridge it. The first and third paragraph are very affecting. See also "Expostulation," p. 258: it reminds me strongly of one of the Penitential Hymns of Burns. The few lines upon St. John the Baptist, by Mrs. Killigrew (vol. ii. p. 6), are pleasing. A beautiful Elegy of Miss Warton (sister to the poets of that name) upon the death of her father, has escaped your notice; nor can I refer you to it. Has the Duchess of Newcastle written much verse? her Life of her Lord, and the extracts in your book, and in the "Eminent Ladies," are all that I have seen of hers. The "Mirth and Melancholy," has so many fine strokes of imagination, that I cannot but think there must be merit in many parts of her writings. How beautiful those lines, from "I dwell in groves," to the conclusion, "Yet better loved, the more that I am known," excepting the four verses after "Walk up the hills." And surely the latter verse of the couplet,

> "The tolling bell which for the dead rings out;
> A mill where rushing waters run about;"

is very noticeable: no person could have hit upon that union of images without being possessed of true poetic

[1] Two Volumes, 1755. — *A. D.*

feeling. Could you tell me anything of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu more than is to be learned from Pope's letters and her own? She seems to have been destined for something much higher and better than she became. A parallel between her genius and character and that of Lady Winchelsea her contemporary (though somewhat prior to her), would be well worth drawing.

'And now at last for the poems of Lady Winchelsea. I will transcribe a note from a blank leaf of my own edition, written by me before I saw the scanty notice of her in Walpole. (By the by, that book has always disappointed me when I have consulted it upon any particular occasion.) The note runs thus: "The Fragment," p. 280, seems to prove that she was attached to James II., as does p. 42, and that she suffered by the Revolution. The most celebrated of these poems, but far from the best, is 'The Spleen.' 'The Petition for an absolute Retreat,' and the 'Nocturnal Reverie,' are of much superior merit. See also for favourable specimens, p. 156, 'On the Death of Mr. Thynne,' p. 263; and p. 280, 'Fragment.' The Fable of 'Love, Death, and Reputation,' p. 29, is ingeniously told." Thus far my own note. I will now be more particular. P. 3, "Our Vanity," &c., and p. 163, are noticeable as giving some account from herself of her authorship. See also, p. 148, where she alludes to "The Spleen." She was unlucky in her models, Pindaric Odes and French Fables. But see p. 70, "The Blindness of Elymas," for proof that she could write with powers of a high order when her own individual character and personal feelings were not concerned. For less striking proofs of this power, see p. 4, "All is Vanity," omitting verses 5 and 6, and reading "clouds that are lost and gone," &c. There is merit in the two next stanzas; and the last stanza

towards the close contains a fine reproof for the ostentation of Louis XIV., and one magnificent verse,

"Spent the astonished hours, forgetful to adore."

But my paper is nearly out. As far as "For my garments," p. 36, the poem is charming; it then falls off; revives at p. 39, "Give me there:" p. 41, &c., reminds me of Dyer's "Grongar Hill;" it revives p. 47, towards the bottom, and concludes with sentiments worthy of the writer, though not quite so happily expressed as other parts of the poem. See pages 82, 92, "Whilst in the Muses' paths I stray," p. 113. "The Cautious Lovers," p. 118, has little poetic merit, but is worth reading as characteristic of the author. P. 143, "Deep lines of honour," &c., to "maturer age." P. 151, if shortened, would be striking; p. 154, characteristic; p. 159, from "Meanwhile, ye living parents," to the close, omitting "Nor could we hope," and the five following verses; p. 217, last paragraph; p. 259, *that* you have;[1] pages 262, 263; p. 280. Was Lady W. a R. Catholic? p. 290. "And to the clouds proclaim thy fall;" p. 291, omit "When scatter'd glow-worms," and the next couplet. I have no more room. Pray, excuse this vile scrawl.

'Ever faithfully, yours,

'W. W.

'*P. S.* I have inconsiderately sent your letter to my daughter (now absent), without copying the address. I knew the letter would interest her. I shall direct to your publisher.

'*Rydal Mount.*'

[1] Mr. W. means, that I *have* inserted that poem in my 'Specimens.' — *A. D.*

The French Revolution of July, 1830, could not but excite very strong feelings in Mr. Wordsworth's mind. Among the expressions given to his emotion at that period are these, in two letters to Mr. Gordon.

To G. Huntly Gordon, Esq.

'My dear Mr. Gordon,

. . . . . .

'I cannot but deeply regret that the late King of France and his ministers should have been so infatuated. Their stupidity, not to say their crimes, has given an impulse to the revolutionary and democratic spirit throughout Europe which is premature, and from which much immediate evil may be apprehended whatever things may settle into at last. Whereas, had the government conformed to the increasing knowledge of the people, and not surrendered itself to the counsels of the priests and the bigoted Royalists, things might have been kept in an even course to the mutual improvement and benefit of both governed and governors.

'In France incompatible things are aimed at — a monarchy and democracy to be united without an intervening aristocracy to constitute a graduated scale of power and influence. I cannot conceive how an hereditary monarchy can exist without an hereditary peerage in a country so large as France, nor how either can maintain their ground if the law of the Napoleon code, compelling equal division of property by will, be not repealed. And I understand that a vast majority of the French are decidedly adverse to the repeal of that law, which, I cannot but think, will ere long be found injurious both to France, and, in its collateral effects, to the rest of Europe.

'Ever, dear Mr. Gordon,

'Cordially and faithfully yours,

'Wm. Wordsworth.'

'My dear Mr. Gordon,

'Thanks for your hint about Rhenish: strength from wine is good, from water still better.

. . . . . .

'One is glad to see tyranny baffled and foolishness put to shame; but the French King and his ministers will be unfairly judged by all those who take not into consideration the difficulties of their position. It is not to be doubted that there has long existed a determination, and that plans have been laid, to destroy the government which the French received, as they felt, at the hands of the Allies, and their pride could not bear. Moreover, the Constitution, had it been their own choice, would by this time have lost favour in the eyes of the French, as not sufficiently democratic for the high notion *that* people entertain of their fitness to govern themselves; but, for my own part, I'd rather fill the office of a parish beadle than sit on the throne where the Duke of Orleans has suffered himself to be placed.

'The heat is gone, and but that we have too much rain again, the country would be enchanting.

'With a thousand thanks,

'I remain ever yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

Mr. Wordsworth was not sanguine with respect to the prospects of France and her new dynasty. In his lines on 'Presentiments,' written at this time, he thus speaks:

'When some great Change gives boundless scope
To an exulting Nation's hope,
Oft, startled and made wise
By your low-breathed interpretings,
The simply-meek foretaste the springs
Of bitter contraries.'[1]

[1] 1830, Vol. ii. p. 196.

On the 11th October, 1830, Mr. Wordsworth's eldest son, the Reverend John Wordsworth, then Rector of Moresby, was married to Isabella Christian Curwen, daughter of Henry Curwen, Esq., of Workington Hall, Cumberland, and of Curwen's Isle, Windermere.

[Lines by Mrs. Barbauld, referred to in a previous note in this chapter:

'Octogenary Reflections.

Say, ye who through this round of eighty years
Have proved its joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, —
Say, what is life, ye veterans, who have trod
Step following step, its flowery, thorny road?
Enough of good to kindle strong desire,
Enough of ill to damp the rising fire,
Enough of love and fancy, joy and hope,
To fan desire, and give the passions scope,
Enough of disappointment, sorrow, pain,
To seal the wise man's sentence, All is vain, —
And quench the wish to live those years again.
Science for man unlocks her various store,
And gives enough to urge the wish for more;
Systems and suns lie open to his gaze,
Nature invites his love, and God his praise;
Yet doubt and ignorance with his feelings sport,
And Jacob's ladder is some rounds too short.
Yet still to humble hope enough is given
Of light from reason's lamp, and light from heaven,
To teach us what to follow, what to shun,
To bow the head, and say "Thy will be done!"'

'The Works of Anna Lætitia Barbauld, with a Memoir by Lucy Aikin.' Vol. I. p. 313.

In referring to this poem, manifestly by memory alone, Wordsworth's recollection appears, in citing it, to have taken the form of the composition of an original line. — H. R.]

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Yet still to humble hope enough is given
Of light from reason's lamp, and light from heaven,
To teach us what to follow, what to shun,
To bow the head, and say "Thy will be done!"'

'The Works of Anna Lætitia Barbauld, with a Memoir by Lucy Aikin.' Vol. I. p. 313.

In referring to this poem, manifestly by memory alone, Wordsworth's recollection appears, in citing it, to have taken the form of the composition of an original line. — H. R.]

'My dear Mr. Gordon,

'Thanks for your hint about Rhenish: strength from wine is good, from water still better.

. . . . . .

'One is glad to see tyranny baffled and foolishness put to shame; but the French King and his ministers will be unfairly judged by all those who take not into consideration the difficulties of their position. It is not to be doubted that there has long existed a determination, and that plans have been laid, to destroy the government which the French received, as they felt, at the hands of the Allies, and their pride could not bear. Moreover, the Constitution, had it been their own choice, would by this time have lost favour in the eyes of the French, as not sufficiently democratic for the high notion *that* people entertain of their fitness to govern themselves; but, for my own part, I'd rather fill the office of a parish beadle than sit on the throne where the Duke of Orleans has suffered himself to be placed.

'The heat is gone, and but that we have too much rain again, the country would be enchanting.

'With a thousand thanks,

'I remain ever yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

Mr. Wordsworth was not sanguine with respect to the prospects of France and her new dynasty. In his lines on 'Presentiments,' written at this time, he thus speaks:

'When some great Change gives boundless scope
To an exulting Nation's hope,
Oft, startled and made wise
By your low-breathed interpretings,
The simply-meek foretaste the springs
Of bitter contraries.'[1]

[1] 1830, Vol. ii. p. 196.

On the 11th October, 1830, Mr. Wordsworth's eldest son, the Reverend John Wordsworth, then Rector of Moresby, was married to Isabella Christian Curwen, daughter of Henry Curwen, Esq., of Workington Hall, Cumberland, and of Curwen's Isle, Windermere.

[Lines by Mrs. Barbauld, referred to in a previous note in this chapter:

'OCTOGENARY REFLECTIONS.

Say, ye who through this round of eighty years
Have proved its joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, —
Say, what is life, ye veterans, who have trod
Step following step, its flowery, thorny road?
Enough of good to kindle strong desire,
Enough of ill to damp the rising fire,
Enough of love and fancy, joy and hope,
To fan desire, and give the passions scope,
Enough of disappointment, sorrow, pain,
To seal the wise man's sentence, All is vain, —
And quench the wish to live those years again.
Science for man unlocks her various store,
And gives enough to urge the wish for more;
Systems and suns lie open to his gaze,
Nature invites his love, and God his praise;
Yet doubt and ignorance with his feelings sport,
And Jacob's ladder is some rounds too short.
Yet still to humble hope enough is given
Of light from reason's lamp, and light from heaven,
To teach us what to follow, what to shun,
To bow the head, and say "Thy will be done!"'

'The Works of Anna Lætitia Barbauld, with a Memoir by Lucy Aikin.' Vol. I. p. 313.

In referring to this poem, manifestly by memory alone, Wordsworth's recollection appears, in citing it, to have taken the form of the composition of an original line. — H. R.]

denied that, if it is wanting in that characteristic quality, the aspect of common life, so far as concerns its beauty, must suffer. Sincere Christian piety may be thought not to stand in need of refinement or studied ornament, but assuredly it is ever ready to adopt them, when they fall within its notice, as means allow: and this observation applies not only to manners, but to everything that a Christian (truly so in spirit) cultivates and gathers round him, however humble his social condition.'

Roslin Chapel in a Storm.[1] — 'We were detained, by incessant rain and storm, at the small inn near Roslin Chapel, and I passed a great part of the day pacing to and fro in this beautiful structure, which, though not used for public service, is not allowed to go to ruin. Here this sonnet was composed, and I shall be fully satisfied if it has at all done justice to the feeling which the place and the storm raging without inspired. I was as a prisoner: a painter delineating the interior of the chapel and its minute features, under such circumstances, would no doubt have found his time agreeably shortened. But the movements of the mind must be more free while dealing with words than with lines and colours. Such,

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generation is indebted to it. They respect and love it, as accommodated in so great a measure to a comparatively poor country, through the far greater portion of which prevails a uniformity of employment; but the acknowledged deficiency of theological learning among the clergy of that church is easily accounted for by this very equality. What else may be wanting there, it would be unpleasant to inquire, and might prove invidious to determine: one thing, however, is clear; that in all countries the temporalities of the Church Establishment should bear an analogy to the state of society, otherwise it cannot diffuse its influence through the whole community.'

[1] Vol. iii. p. 224.

at least, was then, and has been on many other occasions, my belief; and as it is allotted to few to follow both arts with success, I am grateful to my own calling for this and a thousand other recommendations which are denied to that of the painter.'

The Trosachs.[1]—'As recorded in my sister's journal, I had first seen the Trosachs in her and Coleridge's company. The sentiment that runs through this sonnet was natural to the season in which I again saw this beautiful spot; but this, and some other sonnets that follow, were coloured by the remembrance of my recent visit to Sir Walter Scott, and the melancholy errand on which he was going.'

Loch Etive.[2] 'That make the patriot spirit.'—'It was mortifying to have frequent occasions to observe the bitter hatred of the lower orders of the Highlanders to their superiors; love of country seemed to have passed into its opposite. Emigration the only relief looked to with hope.'

Eagles.[3]—'"The last I saw was on the wing," off the promontory of Fairhead, county of Antrim. I mention this, because, though my tour in Ireland, with Mr. Marshall and his son, was made many years ago, this allusion to the eagle is the only image supplied by it to the poetry I have since written. We travelled through the country in October; and to the shortness of the days, and the speed with which we travelled (in a carriage-and-four), may be ascribed this want of notices, in my verse, of a country so interesting. The deficiency I am somewhat ashamed of, and it is the more remarkable, as contrasted with my Scotch and continental tours, of which so many memorials are to be found in these volumes.'

[1] Vol. iii. p. 224. [2] Vol. iii. p. 225. [3] Vol. iii. p. 226.

Sound of Mull.[1] — 'Touring late in the season in Scotland is an uncertain speculation. We were detained a week by rain at Bunaw, on Loch Etive, in a vain hope that the weather would clear up, and allow me to show my daughter the beauties of Glencoe. Two days we were at the Isle of Mull, on a visit to Major Campbell; but it rained incessantly, and we were obliged to give up our intention of going to Staffa. The rain pursued us to Tyndrum, where the next sonnet was composed in a storm.'[2]

The Avon.[3] 'Yet is it one that other rivulets bear.' — 'There is the Shakspeare Avon, the Bristol Avon, the one that flows by Salisbury, and a small river in Wales, I believe, bear the name; Avon being, in the ancient tongue, the general name for river.'

Inglewood Forest.[4] — 'The extensive forest of Inglewood has been enclosed within my memory. I was well acquainted with it in its ancient state. The hartshorn tree, mentioned in the next sonnet, was one of its remarkable objects, as well as another tree that grew upon an eminence not far from Penrith. It was single and conspicuous, and, being of a round shape, though it was universally known to be a "sycamore," it was always called the "round thorn," so difficult is it to chain fancy down to fact.'

Fancy and Tradition.[5] — 'Suggested by the recollection of Juliana's bower and other traditions connected with this ancient forest.'

Highland Broach.[6] — 'On ascending a hill that leads from Loch Awe towards Inverary, I fell into conversation with a woman of the humbler class, who wore one of

[1] Vol. iii. p. 226. [2] Vol. iii. p. 227. [3] Vol. iii. p. 234.
[4] Vol. iii. p. 235. [5] Vol. iii. p. 236. [6] Vol. iii. p. 229.

these Highland broaches. I talked with her about it, and upon parting with her, when I said, with a kindness I truly felt, "May the broach continue in your family for many generations to come, as you have already possessed it," she thanked me most becomingly, and seemed not a little moved.'

The following letters refer in part to 'Yarrow Revisited.' [1]

To Professor Hamilton.

'*Rydal Mount, Oct.* 27, [1831.]

'My dear Mr. Hamilton,

'As Dora has told your sister, Sir W. was our guide to Yarrow. The pleasure of that day induced me to add a third to the two poems upon Yarrow, "Yarrow Revisited." It is in the same measure, and as much in the same spirit

[1] The following Sonnet belongs to this period:

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT FROM ABBOTSFORD, FOR NAPLES.

'A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height:
Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain
For kindred Power, departing from their sight.
. . . . . .
'Be true,
Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
Wafting your Charge to soft Parthenope!' *

* Vol. iii. p. 222., by which the reader will be reminded of Horace's

'Navis, quæ tibi creditum
Debes Virgilium,' &c.

See above, p. 236.

as matter of fact would allow. You are artist enough to know that it is next to impossible entirely to harmonize things that rest upon their poetic credibility, and are idealized by distance of time and space, with those that rest upon the evidence of the hour, and have about them the thorny points of actual life.'

To Lady Frederick Bentinck.

'*Rydal Mount, Nov.* 9.

'My dear Lady Frederick,

. . . . . .

'You are quite right, dear Lady F., in congratulating me on my late ramble in Scotland. I set off with a severe inflammation in one of my eyes, which was removed by being so much in the open air; and for more than a month I scarcely saw a newspaper, or heard of their contents. During this time we almost forgot, my daughter and I, the deplorable state of the country. My spirits rallied, and, with exercise — for I often walked scarcely less than twenty miles a day — and the employment of composing verses, amid scenery the most beautiful, and at a season when the foliage was most rich and varied, the time flew away delightfully; and when we came back into the world again, it seemed as if I had waked from a dream, that never was to return. We travelled in an open carriage with one horse, driven by Dora; and while we were in the Highlands I walked most of the way by the side of the carriage, which left us leisure to observe the beautiful appearances. The rainbows and coloured mists floating about the hills were more like enchantment than anything I ever saw, even among the Alps. There was in particular, the day we made the tour of Loch Lomond in the steam-boat, a fragment of a rainbow, so broad, so splendid,

so glorious, with its reflection in the calm water, it astonished every one on board, a party of foreigners especially, who could not refrain from expressing their pleasure in a more lively manner than we are accustomed to do. My object in going to Scotland so late in the season was to see Sir Walter Scott before his departure. We stayed with him three days, and he quitted Abbotsford the day after we left it. His health has undoubtedly been much shattered, by successive shocks of apoplexy, but his friends say he is so much recovered, that they entertain good hopes of his life and faculties being spared. Mr. Lockhart tells me that he derived benefit by a change of his treatment made by his London physicians, and that he embarked in good spirits.

'As to public affairs, I have no hope but in the goodness of Almighty God. The Lords have recovered much of the credit they had lost by their conduct in the Roman Catholic question. As an Englishman I am deeply grateful for the stand which they have made, but I cannot help fearing that they may be seduced or intimidated. Our misfortune is, that the disapprovers of this monstrous bill give way to a belief that nothing can prevent its being passed; and therefore they submit.

'As to the cholera, I cannot say it appals me much; it may be in the order of Providence to employ this scourge for bringing the nation to its senses; though history tells us in the case of the plague at Athens, and other like visitations, that men are never so wicked and depraved as when afflictions of that kind are upon them. So that, after all, one must come round to our only support, submission to the will of God, and faith in the ultimate goodness of His dispensations.

'I am sorry you did not mention your son, in whose health and welfare, and progress in his studies, I am

always much interested. Pray remember me kindly to Lady Caroline. All here join with me in presenting their kindest remembrances to yourself; and believe me, dear Lady Frederick,

'Faithfully and affectionately yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

To Mrs. Hemans.

'*Rydal Mount, Aug.* 20, 1833.

'The visit which occasioned the poem ["Yarrow Revisited,"] addressed to Sir Walter Scott, that you mention in terms so flattering, was a very melancholy one. My daughter was with me. We arrived at his house on Monday noon, and left it at the same time on Thursday, the very day before he quitted Abbotsford for London, on his way to Naples. On the morning of our departure he composed a few lines for Dora's Album, and wrote them in it. We prize this memorial very much, and the more so as an affecting testimony of his regard at a time when, as the verses prove, his health of body and powers of mind were much impaired and shaken. You will recollect the little green book which you were kind enough to write in on its first page.

'Let me hope that your health will improve, so that you may be enabled to proceed with the sacred poetry with which you are engaged. Be assured that I shall duly appreciate the mark of honour you design for me in connection with so interesting a work.' *

* [This friendship began in the summer of 1830, when Mrs. Hemans spent a fortnight at Rydal Mount, as a guest of the Wordsworth family: an agreeable record of her visit is preserved in her letters written at the time; see Chorley's 'Memorials of Mrs. Hemans,' Chap. XII., and the 'Memoir of Mrs. Hemans by her Sister.' — H. R.]

CHAPTER XLVIII.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, ETC., 1833.

In the volume referred to in the last chapter, entitled 'Yarrow Revisited,' &c., are contained Memorials of a Tour made by Mr. Wordsworth, accompanied by his son, the Rev. John Wordsworth, rector of Brigham, near Cockermouth, and Henry Crabb Robinson, Esq., in the summer of 1833.

'The course pursued was, down the Cumberland river Derwent, and to Whitehaven; thence, by the Isle of Man, where a few days were passed, up the Frith of Clyde to Greenock; then to Oban, Staffa, Iona; and back towards England by Loch Awe, Inverary, Loch Goilhead, Greenock, and through parts of Renfrewshire, Ayrshire, and Dumfriesshire, to Carlisle; and thence up the river Eden, and by Ullswater to Rydal.'[1]

In these 'Memorials,' the Poet pays a tribute of affectionate remembrance to the river on whose banks he was nursed, the Derwent; and to the town in which he was born, and in whose churchyard his father's remains lie; and to the castle of Cockermouth, in which he played when a boy.[2]

The 'Nun's Well,'[3] mentioned in the next sonnet, is at

[1] See preliminary note, vol. iv. p. 143.

[2] Vol. iv. p. 145, 146.

[3] Vol. iv. p. 147.

Brigham, his son's parish; and the building of a new parsonage in that parish by the rector supplied the occasion of that which follows,

> 'Pastor and patriot, at whose bidding rise
> These modest walls.'[1]

An act of his younger son, William, saving the life of a boy, is the subject of another sonnet in the same series, entitled 'Isle of Man.'[2] The 'Retired Mariner,' who wrote the sonnet beginning

> 'From early youth I ploughed the restless main,'

was a brother of Mrs. Wordsworth, Mr. Henry Hutchinson, a person of great originality and vigour of mind, a very enterprising sailor, and a writer of verses distinguished by no ordinary merit. The next sonnet is supposed to express the feelings of a friend, Mr. Cookson, who resided at Bala Sala, and died a few years after it was written.[3]

The following particulars were noted down from Mr. Wordsworth's mouth concerning the sonnet on 'Tynwald Hill,' where the king of Man was enthroned in olden times.[4]

Tynwald Hill. — 'Mr. Robinson and I walked the greater part of the way from Castle-Town to Peel, and stopped some time at Tynwald Hill. One of our companions was an elderly man, who, in a muddy way, for he was tipsy, explained and answered, as far as he could, my inquiries about this place, and the ceremonies held here. I found more agreeable company in some little children, one of whom, upon my request, recited the Lord's Prayer to me, and I helped her to a clearer understanding of it as well as I could; but I was not at all

[1] Vol. iv. p. 147.
[2] Vol. iv. p. 156.
[3] Vol. iv. p. 157.
[4] Vol. iv. p. 158.

satisfied with my own part — hers was much better done; and I am persuaded that, like other children, she knew more about it than she was able to express, especially to a stranger.'[1]

He also gave some details on the occasion of the sonnet on 'Ailsa Crag,' in the Frith of Clyde, in an eclipse of the sun, July 17.

Ailsa Crag. — 'The morning of the eclipse was exquisitely beautiful while we passed the crag, as described in the sonnet. On the deck of the steamboat were several persons of the poor and labouring class; and I could not but be struck with their cheerful talk with each other, while not one of them seemed to notice the magnificent objects with which we were surrounded; and even the phenomenon of the eclipse attracted but little of their attention. Was it right not to regret this? They appeared to me, however, so much alive in their own minds to their own concerns that I could not but look upon it as a misfortune that they had little perception for such pleasures as cannot be cultivated without ease and leisure. Yet, if one surveys life in all its duties and relations, such ease and leisure will not be found so enviable a privilege as it may at first appear. Natural philosophy, painting, and poetry, and refined taste, are no doubt great acquisitions to society; but among those who dedicate themselves to such pursuits, it is to be feared that few are as happy and as consistent in the management of their lives as the class of persons who at that time led me into this course of reflection. Among them, self-tormentors, so numerous in the higher classes of society, are rare.' *

[1] MSS. I. F.

* [A similar phenomenon of the heavens had been the subject of one of his earlier poems — 'The Eclipse of the Sun — 1820,'

The first sonnet on 'Staffa'[1] describes the unfavourable condition in which tourists are placed, for the contemplation of Nature, when they hurry about, or are driven, as it were, in herds through magnificent scenes, instead of viewing them under those circumstances of leisure and repose which are requisite to a due appreciation of what is sublime or picturesque.

'How, then,' Mr. Wordsworth asks, 'came the three next sonnets to be written on Staffa?' 'In fact,' was the answer, 'at the risk of incurring the reasonable displeasure of the master of the steamboat, I *returned* to the cave after the crowd had departed, and explored it under circumstances more favourable to those impressions which it is so wonderfully fitted to make upon the mind.'[2]

The sonnet of 'Mosgiel Farm,' once held by Burns,[3] drew the following remarks from the author, upon Burns and his poetry.

There, said a stripling. — 'Mosgiel was thus pointed out to me by a young man, on the top of the coach on my way from Glasgow to Kilmarnock. It is remarkable, that though Burns lived some time here, and during much the most productive period of his poetical life, he nowhere adverts to the splendid prospects stretching towards the sea, and bounded by the peaks of Arran on one part, which in clear weather he must have had daily before his

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(Vol. III. p. 132) of which Professor Wilson said — 'We do not hesitate to pronounce "Eclipse of the Sun, 1820," one of the finest lyrical effusions of combined thought, passion, sentiment, and imagery within the whole compass of poetry.' See his grand criticism on the poem, in the article 'Sacred Poetry,' in 'The Recreations of Christopher North,' Vol. II. p. 363. — H. R.]

[1] Vol. iv. p. 164.
[2] See note, vol. iv. p. 290.
[3] Vol. iv. p. 168.

eyes. Yet this is easily explained. In one of his poetical effusions he speaks of describing "fair Nature's face," as a privilege on which he sets a high value; nevertheless, natural appearances rarely take a lead in his poetry. It is as a human being, eminently sensitive and intelligent, and not as a poet clad in his priestly robes and carrying the ensigns of sacerdotal office, that he interests and affects us.

'Whether he speaks of rivers, hills, and woods, it is not so much on account of the properties with which they are absolutely endowed, as relatively to local patriotic remembrances and associations, or as they are ministerial to personal feelings, especially those of love, whether happy or otherwise; yet it is not *always* so. Soon after we passed Mosgiel Farm we crossed the Ayr, murmuring and winding through a narrow woody hollow. His line,

"Auld hermit Ayr staw[1] through his woods,"

came at once to my mind, with Irwin, Lugar, Ayr, and Doon, Ayrshire streams over which he breathes a sigh, as being unnamed in song; and, surely, his own attempts to make them known were as successful as his heart could desire.'

On the sonnet entitled 'Nunnery,'[2] he said, 'I became acquainted with the walks of Nunnery when a boy. They are within easy reach of a day's pleasant excursion from the town of Penrith, where I used to pass my summer holidays under the roof of my maternal grandfather. The place is well worth visiting, though within these few years its privacy, and therefore the pleasure which the scene is so well fitted to give, has been injuriously affected by walks cut in the rocks on that side the stream which had been left in its natural state.'

[1] 'Staw,' *i. e.* stole.

[2] Vol. iv. p. 170.

The tourists turned to the south-west from Penrith, and returned home by Ullswater, the banks of which are the scene of the 'Somnambulist.'[1]

'This poem,' said Mr. W., 'might be dedicated to my friend Sir G. Beaumont and Mr. Rogers jointly. While we were making an excursion together in this part of the Lake District, we heard that Mr. Glover the artist, while lodging at Lyulph's Tower, had been disturbed by a loud shriek, and upon rising he learnt that it had come from a young woman in the house who was in the habit of walking in her sleep. In that state she had gone down stairs, and, while attempting to open the outer door, either from some difficulty, or the effect of the cold stone upon her feet, had uttered the cry which alarmed him. It seemed to us all that this might serve as a hint for a poem, and the story here told was constructed, and soon after put into verse by me as it now stands.'

One of the concluding sonnets belongs to the same neighbourhood —

> 'Not in the mines beyond the western main,
> You say, CORDELIA, was the metal sought;'[2]

and is a record of the Poet's affection for one of the inmates of the hospitable mansion of Hallsteads, a family with whom Mr. Wordsworth, and his wife, sister, and daughter, were long united by the ties of a very near and dear friendship.

[1] Vol. iv. p. 173. [2] Vol. iv. p. 178.

CHAPTER XLIX.

POLITICAL APPREHENSIONS. — REFORM IN PARLIAMENT. — UNIVERSITY REFORM. — EVENING VOLUNTARIES.

'In the present volume'[1] (that is, his "Yarrow Revisited,") says Mr. Wordsworth, 'as in the author's previous poems,

[1] Postscript, vol. v. p. 250. In this postscript, which stands at p. 323 of the volume 'Yarrow Revisited,' &c., Mr. Wordsworth has expressed his opinion more in detail on certain questions of civil and ecclesiastical polity.*

* [It is of this 'Postscript' that the daughter of Coleridge has lately said — 'After framing the above attempt at proving that justice is embodied in the principle of a Poor Law by the reciprocation of rights and duties, and the interchange of benefits, since the poor man out of work is only by accident, and for a given time, out of the condition of contributing his services to the commonwealth, I found, to my delight, the argument which had possession of my mind, — the same argument in substance, — more forcibly stated by Mr. Wordsworth in the fine discourse of economical polity, which is placed at the end of his Yarrow volume. Because Mr. Wordsworth is a great Poet, the misjudging many (I do not speak of thoughtful men) take it for granted, that he is no more to be consulted or put faith in, on such a subject as political economy, than a lion is to be sent to market with panniers on his back, like old Dobbin. The essay of which I have spoken, and which appears under the unassuming title of "Postscript," if divided and expanded, would suffice to create a reputation for a new and unknown writer. Like the many-branched oak of ages, Mr Wordsworth overshadows himself, in part, *with himself*. In common with most *great* writers, he is not to be taken

the reader will have found occasionally opinions expressed upon the course of public affairs, and feelings given vent to, as national interests excited them.'

The greater portion of that volume was written in the eventful period of the years 1830–1834, when a revolutionary tempest, let loose from France, was sweeping over Europe; and when England was passing through the throes of agitation produced by the discussion of the Reform Bill.

In the Poet's own words,[1] these his effusions were poured forth at a time, when

> 'every day brought with it tidings new,
> Of rash change, ominous for the public weal.'

These poems were composed under the impulse of strong feelings of patriotism and philanthropy. Solicitous for the peace, honour, and prosperity of his country, and of society at large, and writing under the inspiration of alarm aggravated by his own reminiscences of the horrors perpetrated before his own eyes, in the sacred name of Liberty and Reason, in revolutionary France, at the close of the last century, he craves indulgence and forgiveness.

> 'If dejection have too oft encroached
> Upon that sweet and tender melancholy
> Which may, itself, be cherished and caressed
> More than enough.'

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in during one course of study; for the individual student one set of his productions postpones, if it does not prevent, the knowledge of another set. But I allude to that study whereby we receive a poet's heart and mind into our own, not to mere ordinary reading.' See Introductory 'Sections' (No. IX.) by Mrs. H. N. Coleridge, in 'Essays on His own Times, by S. T. Coleridge, edited by his Daughter, 1850.' Vol. I. p. 62.— H. R.]

[1] Vol. iii. p. 238.

His feelings at this time may be gathered from his communications to his friends. The following, written in 1831, will be read with interest. It is a reply to a much valued friend, the Rev. J. K. Miller, vicar of Walkeringham, who, together with some other correspondents, particularly the late revered and lamented Hugh James Rose, had urged Mr. Wordsworth to exercise those powers, in writing on public affairs, which he had displayed twenty years before, in his 'Essay on the Convention of Cintra.'

'*Rydal Mount, Kendal, Dec.* 17, 1831.

'My dear Sir,

'You have imputed my silence, I trust, to some cause neither disagreeable to yourself nor unworthy of me. Your letter of the 26th of Nov. had been misdirected to Penrith, where the postmaster detained it some time, expecting probably that I should come to that place, which I have often occasion to visit. When it reached me I was engaged in assisting my wife to make out some of my mangled and almost illegible MSS., which inevitably involved me in endeavours to correct and improve them. My eyes are subject to frequent inflammations, of which I had an attack (and am still suffering from it) while that was going on. You would nevertheless have heard from me almost as soon as I received your letter, could I have replied to it in terms in any degree accordant to my wishes. Your exhortations troubled me in a way you cannot be in the least aware of; for I have been repeatedly urged by some of my most valued friends, and at times by my own conscience, to undertake the task you have set before me. But I will deal frankly with you. A conviction of my incompetence to do justice to the momentous subject has kept me, and I fear will keep me, silent. My sixty-second year will soon be completed,

and though I have been favoured thus far in health and strength beyond most men of my age, yet I feel its effects upon my spirits; they sink under a pressure of apprehension to which, at an earlier period of my life, they would probably have been superior. There is yet another obstacle: I am no ready master of prose writing, having been little practised in the art. This last consideration will not weigh with you; nor would it have done with myself a few years ago; but the bare mention of it will serve to show that years have deprived me of *courage*, in the sense the word bears when applied by Chaucer to the animation of birds in spring time.

'What I have already said precludes the necessity of otherwise confirming your assumption that I am opposed to the spirit you so justly characterize.[1] To your opinions upon this subject, my judgment (if I may borrow your own word) "responds." Providence is now trying this empire through her political institutions. Sound minds find their expediency in principles; unsound, their principles in expediency. On the proportion of these minds to each other the issue depends. From calculations of partial expediency in opposition to general principles, whether those calculations be governed by fear or presumption, nothing but mischief is to be looked for; but, in the present stage of our affairs, the class that does the most harm consists of *well-intentioned* men, who, being ignorant of human nature, think that they may help the thorough-paced reformers and revolutionists to a *certain* point, then stop, and that the machine will stop with them. After all, the question is, fundamentally, one of piety and morals; of piety, as disposing men who are anxious for social improvement to wait patiently for God's good time;

[1] As revolutionary.

and of morals, as guarding them from doing evil that good may come, or thinking that any ends *can* be so good as to justify wrong means for attaining them. In fact, means, in the concerns of this life, are infinitely more important than ends, which are to be valued mainly according to the qualities and virtues requisite for their attainment; and the best test of an end being good is the purity of the means, which, by the laws of God and our nature, must be employed in order to secure it. Even the interests of eternity become distorted the moment they are looked at through the medium of impure means. Scarcely had I written this, when I was told by a person in the Treasury, that it is intended to carry the Reform Bill by a new creation of peers. If this be done, the constitution of England will be destroyed, and the present Lord Chancellor, after having contributed to murder it, may consistently enough pronounce, in his place, its *éloge funèbre!*

'I turn with pleasure to the sonnets you have addressed to me, and if I did not read them with unqualified satisfaction, it was only from consciousness that I was unworthy of the encomiums they bestowed upon me.

'Among the papers I have lately been arranging, are passages that would prove, as forcibly as anything of mine that has been published, you were not mistaken in your supposition that it is the habit of my mind inseparably to connect loftiness of imagination with that humility of mind which is best taught in Scripture.

'Hoping that you will be indulgent to my silence, which has been, from various causes, protracted contrary to my wish,

'Believe me to be, dear Sir,

'Very faithfully yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

About the same time, in writing to a scientific and literary friend on poetical topics, he reverts to what was then uppermost in his mind — the political crisis of the time.

'*Nov.* 22, 1831.

'My dear ——,

'You send me showers of verses, which I receive with much pleasure, as do we all; yet have we fears that this employment may seduce you from the path of science, which you seem destined to tread with so much honour to yourself and profit to others. Again and again I must repeat, that the composition of verse is infinitely more of an *art* than men are prepared to believe; and absolute success in it depends upon innumerable minutiæ, which it grieves me you should stoop to acquire a knowledge of. Milton talks of "pouring easy his unpremeditated verse." It would be harsh, untrue, and odious, to say there is anything like cant in this; but it is not *true* to the letter, and tends to mislead. I could point out to you five hundred passages in Milton upon which labour has been bestowed, and twice five hundred more to which additional labour would have been serviceable. Not that I regret the absence of such labour, because *no poem* contains more proofs of skill acquired by practice.

. . . . . .

"Shakspeare's sonnets (excuse this leaf) are not upon the Italian model, which Milton's are; they are merely quatrains with a couplet attached to the end, and if they depended much upon the versification they would unavoidably be heavy.

'One word upon Reform in Parliament, a subject to which, somewhat reluctantly, you allude. You are a reformer! Are you an approver of the Bill as rejected

by the Lords? or, to use Lord Grey's words, anything "as efficient?"—he means, if he means anything, for producing change. Then I earnestly entreat you to devote hours and hours to the study of human nature, in books, in life, and in your own mind; and beg and pray that you would mix with society, not in Ireland and Scotland only, but in England; a fount of destiny which, if once poisoned, away goes all hope of quiet progress in well doing. The constitution of England, which seems about to be destroyed, offers to my mind the sublimest contemplation which the history of society and government have ever presented to it; and for this cause especially, that its principles have the character of preconceived ideas, archetypes of the pure intellect, while they are, in fact, the results of a humble-minded experience. Think about this, apply it to what we are threatened with, and farewell.

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

The following letters, written in the next year, intimate that his mind was labouring under a weight of grief of a twofold nature.

To Lord Lonsdale.

'*Rydal Mount, Feb.* 17, 1832.

'My Lord,

. . . . . .

'If, after all, I should be asked how I would myself vote, if it had been my fortune to have a seat in the House of Lords, I must say that I should oppose the second reading, though with my eyes open to the great hazard of doing so. My support, however, would be found in standing by a great *principle;* for, without being unbecomingly personal, I may state to your Lordship,

that it has ever been the habit of my mind to trust that expediency will come out of fidelity to principles, rather than to seek my principles of action in calculations of expediency.

'With this observation I conclude, trusting your Lordship will excuse my having detained you so long.

'I have the honour to be, most faithfully,

'Your much obliged,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

To Lady Frederick Bentinck.

'You were not mistaken in supposing that the state of public affairs has troubled me much. I cannot see how the government is to be carried on, but by such sacrifices to the democracy as will, sooner or later, upset everything. Whoever governs, it will be by out-bidding for popular favour those who went before them. Sir Robert Peel was obliged to give way in his government to the spirit of Reform, as it is falsely called; these men are going beyond him; and if ever he shall come back, it will only, I fear, be to carry on the movement, in a shape somewhat less objectionable than it will take from the Whigs. In the mean while the Radicals or Republicans are cunningly content to have this work done ostensibly by the Whigs, while in fact they themselves are the Whigs' masters, as the Whigs well know; but they hope to be preserved from destruction by throwing themselves back upon the Tories when measures shall be urged upon them by their masters which they may think too desperate. What I am most afraid of is, alterations in the constituency, and in the duration of Parliament, which will bring it more and more under the dominion of the lower and lowest classes. On this account I fear the proposed Cor-

poration Reform, as a step towards household suffrage, vote by ballot, &c. As to a union of the Tories and Whigs in Parliament, I see no prospect of it whatever. To the great Whig lords may be truly applied the expression in Macbeth,

> "They have eaten of the insane root
> That takes the reason prisoner."

. . . . . .

'I ordered two copies of my new volume to be sent to Cottesmere. And now farewell; and believe me,

'Dear Lady Frederick,

'Ever faithfully yours,

'W. WORDSWORTH.'

To the Rev. Dr. Wordsworth.

'*Rydal Mount, April* 1, 1832.

'My dear Brother,

'Our dear sister makes no progress towards recovery of strength. She is very feeble, never quits her room, and passes most of the day in, or upon, the bed. She does not suffer much pain, and is very cheerful, and nothing troubles her but public affairs and the sense of requiring so much attention. Whatever may be the close of this illness, it will be a profound consolation to you, my dear brother, and to us all, that it is borne with perfect resignation; and that her thoughts are such as the good and pious would wish. She reads much, both religious and miscellaneous works.

'If you see Mr. Watson, remember me affectionately to him.

'I was so distressed with the aspect of public affairs, that were it not for our dear sister's illness, I should think of nothing else. They are to be envied, I think, who,

from age or infirmity, are likely to be removed from the afflictions which God is preparing for this sinful nation. God bless you, my brother. John says you are well; so am I, and every one here except our sister: but I have witnessed one revolution in a foreign country, and I have not courage to think of facing another in my own. Farewell. God bless you again.

'Your affectionate Brother,

'W. W.'

To Professor Hamilton.

'*Moresby, June* 25, 1832.

'My dear Mr. Hamilton,

'Your former letter reached me in due time; your second, from Cambridge, two or three days ago. I ought to have written to you long since, but really I have for some time, from private and public causes of sorrow and apprehension, been in a great measure deprived of those genial feelings which, through life, have not been so much accompaniments of my character, as vital principles of my existence.

. . . . . .

'It gives me much pleasure that you and Coleridge have met, and that you were not disappointed in the conversation of a man from whose writings you had previously drawn so much delight and improvement. He and my beloved sister are the two beings to whom my intellect is most indebted, and they are now proceeding, as it were, *pari passu*, along the path of sickness, I will not say towards the grave, but I trust towards a blessed immortality.

'It was not my intention to write so seriously: my heart is full, and you must excuse it.

'Ever faithfully yours,

'Wm. Wordsworth.'

To Mrs. Hemans.

'*Rydal Mount, Nov.* 22, [1832.]

'Dear Mrs. Hemans,

'I will not render this sheet more valueless than at best it will prove, by tedious apologies for not answering your very kind and welcome letter long and long ago. I received it in London, when my mind was in a most uneasy state, and when my eyes were useless both for writing and reading, so that an immediate reply was out of my power; and, since, I have been doubtful where to address you. Accept this, and something better, as my excuse, that I have very often thought of you with kindness and good wishes for your welfare, and that of your fine boys, who must recommend themselves to all that come in their way. Let me thank you in Dora's name for your present of "The Remains of Lucretia Davidson," a very extraordinary young creature, of whom I had before read some account in Mr. Southey's review of this volume. Surely many things, not often bestowed, must concur to make genius an enviable gift. This truth is painfully forced upon one's attention in reading the effusions and story of this enthusiast, hurried to her grave so early. You have, I understand, been a good deal in Dublin. The place I hope has less of the fever of intellectual, or rather literary, ambition than Edinburgh, and is less disquieted by factions and cabals of *persons*. As to those of parties they must be odious and dreadful enough; but since they have more to do with religion, the adherents of the different creeds, perhaps, mingle little together, and so the mischief to social intercourse, though great, will be somewhat less.

'I am not sure but that Miss Jewsbury has judged well

in her determination of going to India. Europe is at present a melancholy spectacle, and these two Islands are likely to reap the fruit of their own folly and madness, in becoming, for the present generation, the two most unquiet and miserable spots upon the earth. May you, my dear friend, find the advantage of the poetic spirit in raising you, in thought at least, above the contentious clouds! Never before did I feel such reason to be grateful for what little inspiration heaven has graciously bestowed upon my humble intellect. What you kindly wrote upon the interest you took during your travels in my verses, could not but be grateful to me, because your own show, that in a rare degree you understand and sympathize with me. We are all well, God be thanked. I am a wretched correspondent, as this scrawl abundantly shows. I know also, that you have far too much, both of receiving and writing letters, but I cannot conclude without expressing a wish, that from time to time you would let us hear from you and yours, and how you prosper. All join with me in kindest remembrance to yourself and your boys, especially to Charles, of whom we know most. Believe me, dear Mrs. Hemans, not the less for my long silence,

'Faithfully and affectionately yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

The following lines, also, written in 1833, give utterance to his feelings at this period.[1]

'Who shall preserve or prop the tottering Realm?
What hand suffice to govern the state-helm?
If, in the aims of men, the surest test
Of good or bad (whate'er be sought for or profest)
Lie in the means required, or ways ordained,
For compassing the end, else never gained;

[1] Vol. iv. p. 237.

Yet governors and governed both are blind
To this plain truth, or fling it to the wind;
If to expedience principle must bow;
Past, future, shrinking up beneath the incumbent Now;
If cowardly concession still must feed
The thirst for power in men who ne'er concede, —'

. . . . . .

Then he forebodes the most disastrous consequences; and therefore utters the following prayer.

'O for a bridle bitted with remorse
To stop your Leaders in their headstrong course!
Oh may the Almighty scatter with his grace
These mists, and lead you to a safer place,
By paths no human wisdom can foretrace!
May He pour round you, from worlds far above
Man's feverish passions, His pure light of love!'

I pass to another topic.

In the summer of 1833, a near relative of his, who had been invited to take a part in the duties of tuition, in a college at Cambridge, and had consulted Mr. Wordsworth on the expediency of accepting the offer, received from him the following reply.

'*Rydal Mount, June* 17, 1833.

'My dear C——,

'You are welcome to England after your long ramble. I know not what to say in answer to your wish for my opinion upon the offer of the lectureship. . . .

'I have only one observation to make, to which I should attach importance if I thought it called for in your case, which I do not. I mean the moral duty of avoiding to encumber yourself with private pupils in any number. You are at an age when the blossoms of the mind are setting, to make fruit; and the practice of *pupil-mongering* is an absolute blight for this process. Whatever deter-

mination you come to, may God grant that it proves for your benefit: this prayer I utter with earnestness, being deeply interested, my dear C——, in all that concerns you. I have said nothing of the uncertainty hanging over all the establishments, especially the religious and literary ones of the country, because if they are to be overturned, the calamity would be so widely spread, that every mode of life would be involved in it, and nothing survive for hopeful calculation.

. . . . . .

'We are always delighted to hear of any or all of you. God bless you, my dear C——.

'Most faithfully, your affectionate,

'W. WORDSWORTH.'

This mention of university affairs leads me to remind the reader, that in the spring of the following year (the year 1834) the question of UNIVERSITY REFORM, as it was termed, was debated in parliament. A bill was laid on the table of the Lower House, for legalizing the admission of persons to reside and graduate in the English universities, without any subscription or declaration of conformity to the Church. This measure produced a good deal of discussion within as well as without the walls of those institutions. It was argued by some members of the universities that the academic system would not suffer in its religious character if the law, which prescribes attendance at divine worship in the college chapels, were abrogated; and that Nonconformists might be admitted with a full understanding that they should not be required to attend any lectures in which any of the distinctive doctrines of Christianity were inculcated, but should be left free to resort for separate worship and instruction to teachers of their own persuasion, who, it

was contemplated, might be matriculated, incorporated, and domiciled, in the ancient colleges of the universities.

I have been induced to advert to this discussion, because it might be inferred from a passage in Mr. Wordsworth's 'Prelude,' that he would not have been unfavourable to the suspension of the daily service in the college chapels.[1] But it should be remembered that this passage was written in his earlier years, when his principles were not yet settled, and he was full of sad recollections of the coldness and irreverence which had seemed to him to prevail in those services when he was an undergraduate. I need not pause to observe that irreverence is obtrusive in its nature, whereas piety is retiring; and that therefore the acci-

[1] The passage is as follows, 'Prelude,' p. 72:

'Be Folly and False-seeming free to affect
Whatever formal gait of discipline
Shall raise them highest in their own esteem —
Let them parade among the Schools at will,
But spare the House of God. Was ever known
The witless shepherd who persists to drive
A flock that thirsts not to a pool disliked?
A weight must surely hang on days begun
And ended with such mockery. Be wise,
Ye Presidents and Deans, and, *till the spirit*
Of ancient times revive, and youth be trained
At home in pious service, to your bells
Give seasonable rest, for 't is a sound
Hollow as ever vexed the tranquil air;
And your officious doings bring disgrace
On the plain steeples of our English Church,
Whose worship, 'mid remotest village trees,
Suffers for this. Even science, too, at hand
In daily sight of this irreverence,
Is smitten thence with an unnatural taint,
Loses her just authority, falls beneath
Collateral suspicion, else unknown.'

dental *evil* of the system is easily cognizable, but that no human eye can appreciate the *essential good*. But I would advert to the fact that even in that passage he is an advocate for the daily service in colleges, provided only that *parents* and *schoolmasters* do *their* duty in imbuing children and scholars with religious principles, and in exercising them in habits of devotion, and in so training them for the universities.

In his later years, and particularly at the period to which I have been adverting in this chapter, he strongly reprobated all attempts to unsettle the religious foundations, and to disturb the religious practices of the English universities.[1]

The writer of a letter to Lord Althorp 'On the Admission of Dissenters to graduate in the University at Cambridge,'[2] in which the evils to be apprehended from the abandonment of the ancient collegiate law and practice with regard to the daily service were pointed out, received the following from Mr. Wordsworth in acknowledgment of that publication.

'*May* 15, 1834.

'My dear C——,

'You will wonder what is become of us, and I am afraid you will think me very unworthy the trouble you took in writing to us and sending your pamphlet. A thousand little things have occurred to prevent my calling upon Mrs. Wordsworth, who is ever ready to write for me, in respect to the question that you have so ably handled. Since the night when the Reform Bill was first introduced, I have been convinced that the institutions of the country cannot be preserved. . . . . .

[1] See above, Vol. I. p. 46–48. [2] Cambridge, May, 1834.

It is a mere question *of time*. A great majority of the present parliament, I believe, are in the main favourable to the preservation of the Church, but among these many are ignorant how that is to be done. Add to the portion of those who with good intentions are in the dark, the number who will be driven or tempted to vote against their consciences by the clamour of their sectarian and infidel constituents under the Reform Bill, and you will have a daily augmenting power even in this parliament, which will be more and more hostile to the Church every week and every day. You will see from the course which my letter thus far has taken, that I regard the prayer of the Petitioners to whom you are opposed as formidable still more from the effect which, if granted, it will ultimately have upon the Church, and through that medium upon the Monarchy and upon social order, than for its immediate tendency to introduce discord in the universities, and all those deplorable consequences which you have so feelingly painted as preparatory to their destruction.

'I am not yet able to use my eyes for reading or writing, but your pamphlet has been twice read to me. . .

'God bless you. . . . .

'Affectionately yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

In the last year but one of his life, in a conversation with an American gentleman, Mr. Wordsworth expressed his regret at the attempts which had been made to disturb the ancient practice of colleges with respect to the daily service.

The following is a notice from himself, suggested by one of his own sonnets[1]:

[1] MSS. L. F.

Sonnet 22. *Decay of Piety.* —

'Oft have I seen, ere time had ploughed,' &c.

'Attendance at church on prayer-days, Wednesdays and Fridays, and holidays, received a shock at the Revolution. It is now, however, happily reviving. The ancient people described in this Sonnet were among the last of that pious class. May we hope that the practice, now in some degree renewed, will continue to spread!'

But I turn from this topic to record that the strongest expressions of Mr. Wordsworth's feelings on the political aspect of this period will be found in 'The Warning,'[1] which forms the sequel to his poem addressed to his daughter-in-law on the birth of her first child, March, 1833. These lines were written at the close of his sixty-third year, and the noble sentiments and vigorous diction of 'The Warning' show that his poetical faculties were still preserved in unimpaired fervour and energy.[2]

A beautiful contrast is presented to these poems by another class, published in the same volume — the 'Evening Voluntaries.'[3] These are characterized by a soft serenity and tender grace, not untinged with melancholy, and yet brightened by faith; and, standing as they do by the side of those *other* poems, they are like sunsets of Claude hanging beside battles of Salvator. Or, to adopt an illustration from their own art, they call to mind that interesting passage of the critic Longinus, when he contrasts the genius of Homer with itself, as seen severally in the Iliad and the Odyssey, and compares it in the former to the Sea in its full swell, and in the latter to its gentle

[1] Vol. iv. p. 237. [2] Vol. iv. p. 239. [3] Vol. iv. p. 124–140.

ebb; or, again, in the one case to the midday sun, and in the other to the mellow lights and golden clouds of evening.[1]

The following lines, derived from these Voluntaries, present a beautiful picture of that meekness and humility which is the characteristic of all truly great and powerful intellects, and which was the pervading spirit of Wordsworth's mind, especially in his later years. One of his nearest friends, who had the best opportunities of seeing him in his most private moods, during the last twelve years of his life, and was familiar with his inmost thoughts, describes him as 'the most humble and loving of men.'

'Not in the lucid intervals of life
That come but as a curse to party-strife;
Not in some hour when Pleasure with a sigh
Of languor puts his rosy garland by;
Not in the breathing-times of that poor slave
Who daily piles up wealth in Mammon's cave —
Is Nature felt, or can be; nor do words,
Which practised talent readily affords,
Prove that her hand has touched responsive chords;
Nor has her gentle beauty power to move
With genuine rapture and with fervent love
The soul of Genius, if he dare to take
Life's rule from passion craved for passion's sake;
Untaught that *meekness is the cherished bent*
Of all the truly great and all the innocent.

'But who *is* innocent? By grace divine,
Not otherwise, O Nature! we are thine,
Through good and evil thine, in just degree
Of rational and manly sympathy.
. . . . .
Vain is the pleasure, a false calm the peace,
If He, through whom alone our conflicts cease,

[1] Long. sect. ix.

Our virtuous hopes without relapse advance,
Come not to speed the Soul's deliverance;
To the distempered Intellect refuse
His gracious help, or give what we abuse.' [1]

And again (in an address to the Supreme Being):

'Whate'er the path these mortal feet may trace,
Breathe through my soul the blessing of thy grace,
Glad, through a perfect love, a faith sincere
Drawn from the *wisdom that begins with fear*,
Glad to expand; and, for a season, free
From finite cares, to rest absorbed in Thee!' [2]

Mr. Wordsworth communicated the following recollections concerning these poems.[3]

Evening Voluntaries — Lines composed on a high part

[1] Vol. iv. p. 128.

[2] Vol. iv. p. 126. Compare the following:

'Sin-blighted though we are, we too,
The reasoning Sons of Men,
From one oblivious winter called
Shall rise, and breathe again;
And in eternal summer lose
Our threescore years and ten.

'To *humbleness of heart* descends
This prescience from on high,
The faith that elevates the just,
Before and when they die;
And makes each soul a separate heaven,
A Court for Deity.' *

And, in fine:

'Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its *tenderness, its joys, and fears*,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.' †

[3] MSS. I. F.

* Vol. ii. p. 194. † Vol. v. p. 154.

of the coast of Cumberland,[1] Easter Sunday, April 7th, the author's sixty-third birth-day. — 'The lines were composed on the road between Moresby and Whitehaven, while I was on a visit to my son, then rector of Moresby. This succession of Voluntaries, with the exception of the 8th and 9th, originated in the concluding lines of the last paragraph of this poem. With this coast I have been familiar from my earliest childhood, and remember being struck for the first time by the town and port of Whitehaven, and the white waves breaking against its quays and piers, as the whole came into view from the top of the high ground down which the road, that has since been altered, then descended abruptly. My sister, when she first heard the voice of the sea from this point, and beheld the scene spread before her, burst into tears. Our family then lived at Cockermouth, and this fact was often mentioned among us as indicating the sensibility for which she was so remarkable.'

Not in the lucid intervals of life.[2] — 'The lines following, "Nor do words," &c., were written with Lord Byron's character as a poet before me, and that of others his contemporaries, who wrote under like influences.'

The leaves that rustled.[3] — 'Composed by the side of Grasmere Lake. The mountains that enclose the vale, especially towards Easedale, are most favourable to the reverberation of sound: there is a passage in "The Excursion," towards the close of the 4th book,[4] where the voice of the raven in flight is traced through the modifications it undergoes, as I have often heard it in that vale and others of this district.' *

[1] Vol. iv. p. 125.
[2] Vol. iv. p. 127.
[3] Vol. iv. p. 131.
[4] Vol. vi. p. 131.

* [Among the 'Evening Voluntaries' as first published, there

To this class may be added, as partaking of the same meditative character, and as composed at this time and published in this volume, the *Lines suggested by a Portrait by F. Stone*, at Rydal Mount,[1] on which the Poet thus speaks: 'This portrait has hung for many years in our principal sitting-room, and represents J. Q. The picture, though it is somewhat thinly painted, has much merit in tone and general effect; it is chiefly valuable, however, for the sentiment that pervades it. The anecdote of the saying of the monk, in sight of Titian's picture,

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appeared one which was withdrawn in the later editions; it was introduced with this autobiographical note:

'For printing the following piece some reason should be given, as not a word of it is original; it is simply a fine stanza of Akenside, connected with a still finer from Beattie by a couplet of Thomson. This practice, in which the author sometimes indulges, of linking together, in his own mind, favourite passages from different authors, seems in itself unobjectionable; but, as the *publishing* such compilations might lead to confusion in literature, he should deem himself inexcusable in giving this specimen, were it not from a hope that it might open to others a harmless source of *private* gratification.' The stanza from Beattie's Ode to 'Retirement,' which closed this 'cento' of Wordsworth's, doubtless delighted him as poetic description of the sounds in secluded vales, which he speaks of above, and also by the fine imaginative effect produced by the transition from the near sound to distant space and silence:

'My haunt the hollow cliff whose Pine
Waves o'er the gloomy stream;
Whence the scared Owl on pinions grey
Breaks from the rustling boughs,
And down the lone vale sails away
To more profound repose!'

'YARROW REVISITED, etc.' p. 177. — H. R.]

[1] Vol. iv. p. 249.

was told me in this house by Mr. Wilkie, and was, I believe, first communicated to the public in this poem, the former portion of which I was composing at the time Southey heard the story from Miss Hutchinson, and transferred it to the "Doctor;" my friend Mr. Rogers, in a note subsequently added to his "Italy," speaks of the same remarkable words having many years before been spoken in his hearing by a monk or priest in front of a picture of the Last Supper, placed over a refectory table in a convent at Padua.'

CHAPTER L.

DOMESTIC HISTORY, 1833 - 1837.

THE following extracts from Mr. Wordsworth's correspondence may furnish some comment on the poems published at this time, together with some details on his personal history and opinions on literature and politics.

To the Rev. Alexander Dyce.

'*Rydal Mount, Kendal, Jan.* 7, 1833.

'My dear Sir,

'Having an opportunity of sending this to town free of postage, I write to thank you for your last obliging letter. Sincerely do I congratulate you upon having made such progress with Skelton, a writer deserving of far greater attention than his works have hitherto received. Your edition will be very serviceable, and may be the occasion of calling out illustrations, perhaps, of particular passages from others, beyond what your own reading, though so extensive, has supplied. I am pleased also to hear that "Shirley" is out.

. . . . . .

'I lament to hear that your health is not good. My own, God be thanked, is excellent; but I am much dejected with the aspect of public affairs, and cannot but fear that this nation is on the brink of great troubles.

'Be assured that I shall at all times be happy to hear of your studies and pursuits, being, with great respect,

'Sincerely yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

To the Rev. Alexander Dyce.

'*Rydal Mount, March* 20, 1833.

'My dear Sir,

'I have to thank you for the very valuable present of Shirley's works, just received. The preface is all that I have yet had time to read. It pleased me to find that you sympathized with me in admiration of the passage from the Duchess of Newcastle's poetry; and you will be gratified to be told that I have the opinion you have expressed of that cold and false-hearted Frenchified coxcomb, Horace Walpole.

'Poor Shirley! what a melancholy end was his! and then to be so treated by Dryden! One would almost suspect some private cause of dislike, such as is said to have influenced Swift in regard to Dryden himself.

'Shirley's death reminded me of a sad close of the life of a literary person, Sanderson by name, in the neighbouring county of Cumberland. He lived in a cottage by himself, though a man of some landed estate. His cottage, from want of care on his part, took fire in the night. The neighbours were alarmed; they ran to his rescue; he escaped, dreadfully burned, from the flames, and lay down (he was in his seventieth year) much exhausted under a tree, a few yards from the door. His friends, in the meanwhile, endeavoured to save what they could of his property from the flames. He inquired most anxiously after a box in which his manuscripts and published pieces had been deposited with a view to a publica-

tion of a laboriously-corrected edition; and, upon being told that the box was consumed, he expired in a few minutes, saying, or rather sighing out the words, "Then I do not wish to live." Poor man! though the circulation of his works had not extended beyond a circle of fifty miles' diameter, perhaps, at furthest, he was most anxious to survive in the memory of the few who were likely to hear of him.

'The publishing trade, I understand, continues to be much depressed, and authors are driven to solicit or invite subscriptions, as being in many cases the only means for giving their works to the world.

'I am always pleased to hear from you; and believe me,

'My dear Sir,
'Faithfully your obliged friend,
'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

To Professor Hamilton.

'*Rydal Mount, May* 8, 1833.

'My dear Sir,

'My letters being of no value but as tokens of friendship, I waited for the opportunity of a frank, which I had reason to expect earlier.

. . . . . .

'Could not you take us in your way coming or going to Cambridge? If Mrs. H. accompanies you, we should be glad to see her also.

'I hope that in the meeting about to take place in Cambridge there will be less of mutual flattery among the men of science than appeared in that of the last year at Oxford. Men of science in England seem, indeed, to copy their fellows in France, by stepping too much out

of their way for titles, and baubles of that kind, and for offices of state and political struggles, which they would do better to keep out of.

'With kindest regards to yourself and Mrs. H., and to your sisters, believe me ever,

'My dear Mr. H.,

'Faithfully yours,

'W. W.'

To Charles Lamb, Esq.

'*Rydal Mount*, [*Friday, May* 17, 1833, *or thereabouts*].

'My dear Lamb,

'I have to thank you and Moxon for a delightful volume, your last (I hope not), of "Elia." I have read it all except some of the "Popular Fallacies," which I reserve . . . . . The book has much pleased the whole of my family, viz. my wife, daughter, Miss Hutchinson, and my poor dear sister, on her sick bed; they all return their best thanks. I am not sure but I like the "Old China," and the "Wedding," as well as any of the Essays. I read "Love me and my Dog" to my poor sister this morning.

. . . . . .

'I have been thus particular, knowing how much you and your dear sister value this excellent person, whose tenderness of heart I do not honestly believe was ever exceeded by any of God's creatures. Her loving-kindness has no bounds. God bless her for ever and ever! Again thanking you for your excellent book, and wishing to know how you and your dear sister are, with best love to you both from us all,

'I remain, my dear Lamb,

'Your faithful friend,

'W. Wordsworth.'

To the Rev. Alexander Dyce.

[*No date to this Letter, but written in* 1833.]

'My dear Sir,

'The dedication[1] which you propose I shall esteem as an honour; nor do I conceive upon what ground, but an over-scrupulous modesty, I could object to it.

'Be assured that Mr. Southey will not have the slightest unwillingness to your making any use you think proper of his "Memoir of Bampfylde:" I shall not fail to mention the subject to him upon the first opportunity.

'You propose to give specimens of the best *sonnet-writers* in our language. May I ask if by this be meant a selection of the *best sonnets*, *best* both as to *kind* and *degree*? A sonnet may be excellent in its kind, but that kind of very inferior interest to one of a higher order, though not perhaps in every minute particular quite so well executed, and from the pen of a writer of inferior genius. It should seem that the best rule to follow would be, first, to pitch upon the sonnets which are best *both* in kind and perfectness of execution, and, next, those which, although of a humbler quality, are admirable for the finish and happiness of the execution; taking care to exclude all those which have not one or other of these recommendations, however striking they might be, as characteristic of the age in which the author lived, or some peculiarity of his manner. The 10th sonnet of Donne, beginning "Death, be not proud," is so eminently characteristic of his manner, and at the same time so weighty in the thought, and vigorous in the expression, that I would

[1] I had requested permission to dedicate a little book, 'Specimens of English Sonnets,' to Mr. W. — *A. D.*

entreat you to insert it, though to modern taste it may be repulsive, quaint, and laboured. There are two sonnets of Russell, which, in all probability, you may have noticed, "Could, then, the babes," and the one upon Philoctetes, the last six lines of which are first-rate. Southey's "Sonnet to Winter" pleases me much; but, above all, among modern writers, that of Sir Egerton Brydges, upon "Echo and Silence." * Miss Williams's "Sonnet upon Twilight" is pleasing; that upon "Hope" of great merit.

'Do you mean to have a short preface upon the construction of the sonnet? Though I have written so many, I have scarcely made up my own mind upon the subject. It should seem that the sonnet, like every other legitimate composition, ought to have a beginning, a middle, and an end; in other words, to consist of three parts, like the three propositions of a syllogism, if such an illustration may be used. But the frame of metre adopted by the Italians does not accord with this view; and, as adhered to by them, it seems to be, if not arbitrary, best fitted to a division of the sense into two parts, of eight and six

* [The effect which Wordsworth's praise of this sonnet produced upon Sir Egerton Brydges himself, is very cordially acknowledged by him in the preface to his 'Autobiography,' dated 'Geneva, 1834;'—where he says,—'When, in the depression of my spirits six or seven years ago, I lost all hope, I clung to the few fragments of high praise, which two or three choice spirits had conferred upon me. I really believe that three or four cherished lines in the hand of Wordsworth, upon one of my sonnets, saved me from a total mental wreck.' P. ix. The interest of this fact is increased when it is remembered how, amid the gloom of disappointment and morbid sensitiveness, Sir Egerton Brydges' long life was distinguished by unwearied industry in European bibliography, and also by voluminous original work of authorship.—H. R.]

lines each. Milton, however, has not submitted to this; in the better half of his sonnets the sense does not close with the rhyme at the eighth line, but overflows into the second portion of the metre. Now, it has struck me, that this is not done merely to gratify the ear by variety and freedom of sound, but also to aid in giving that pervading sense of intense unity in which the excellence of the sonnet has always seemed to me mainly to consist. Instead of looking at this composition as a piece of architecture, making a whole out of three parts, I have been much in the habit of preferring the image of an orbicular body,—a sphere, or a dew-drop. All this will appear to you a little fanciful; and I am well aware that a sonnet will often be found excellent, where the beginning, the middle, and the end are distinctly marked, and also where it is distinctly separated into *two* parts, to which, as I before observed, the strict Italian model, as they write it, is favourable. Of this last construction of sonnet, Russell's upon "Philoctetes" is a fine specimen; the first eight lines give the hardship of the case, the six last the consolation, or the *per-contra*.

'Ever faithfully
'Your much obliged
'friend and servant,
'W. WORDSWORTH.

'*P. S.* In the case of the Cumberland poet, I overlooked a most pathetic circumstance. While he was lying under the tree, and his friends were saving what they could from the flames, he desired them to bring out the box that contained his papers, if possible. A person went back for it, but the bottom dropped out, and the papers fell into the flames and were consumed. Immediately upon hearing this, the poor old man expired.'

To the Rev. Alexander Dyce.

'*Lowther Castle, Sept.* 23, [*qu. Aug.* 1833. *No date of the Year.*]

'My dear Sir,

'I have put off replying to your obliging letter till I could procure a frank; as I had little more to say than to thank you for your attention to Lady Winchelsea,[1] and for the extracts you sent me.

'I expected to find at this place my friend, Lady Frederick Bentinck, through whom I intended to renew my request for materials, if any exist, among the Finch family, whether manuscript poems, or anything else that would be interesting; but Lady F., unluckily, is not likely to be in Westmoreland. I shall, however, write to her. Without some additional materials, I think I should scarcely feel strong enough to venture upon any species of publication connected with this very interesting woman, notwithstanding the kind things you say of the value of my critical remarks.

'I am glad you have taken Skelton in hand, and much wish I could be of any use to you. In regard to his life, I am certain of having read somewhere (I thought it was in Burns's "History of Cumberland and Westmoreland," but I am mistaken), that Skelton was born at Branthwaite Hall, in the County of Cumberland. Certain it is that a family of that name possessed the place for many generations; and I own it would give me some pleasure to make out that Skelton was a brother Cumbrian. Branthwaite Hall is about six miles from Cockermouth, my native place. Tickell (of the "Spectator"), one of the

[1] *i. e.* To Mr. W.'s request that I would, if possible, furnish him with some particulars about her. — *A. D.*

best of our minor poets, as Johnson has truly said, was born within two miles of the same town. These are mere accidents it is true, but I am foolish enough to attach some interest to them.

'If it would be more agreeable to you, I would mention your views in respect to Skelton to Mr. Southey: I should have done so before, but it slipped my memory when I saw him. Mr. Southey is undoubtedly much engaged, but I cannot think that he would take ill a letter from you on any literary subject. At all events, I shall, in a few days, mention your intention of editing Skelton, and ask if he has anything to suggest.

'I meditate a little tour in Scotland this autumn, my principal object being to visit Sir Walter Scott; but as I take my daughter along with me, we probably shall go to Edinburgh, Glasgow, and take a peep at the western Highlands. This will not bring us near Aberdeen.[1] If it suited you to return to town by the Lakes, I should be truly glad to see you at Rydal Mount near Ambleside. You might, at all events, call on Mr. Southey in your way; I would prepare an introduction for you, by naming your intention to Mr. S. I have added this, because my Scotch tour, would, I fear, make it little likely that I should be at home about the 10th September. Your return, however, may be deferred.

'Believe me, my dear Sir,

'Very respectfully, your obliged,

'W. WORDSWORTH.

'*P. S.* I hope your health continues good. I assure you there was no want of interest in your conversation on that or any other account.'

[1] Where I then was. — *A. D.*

To E. Moxon, Esq.

'*Lowther Castle, Westmoreland, Aug.* 1833.

'My dear Mr. Moxon,

. . . . . .

'There does not appear to be much genuine relish for poetical publications in Cumberland, if I may judge from the fact of not a copy of my poems having been sold there by one of the leading booksellers, though Cumberland is my native county. Byron and Scott are, I am persuaded, the only *popular* writers in that line, — perhaps the word ought rather to be that they are *fashionable* writers.

'My poor sister is something better in health. Pray remember me very affectionately to Charles Lamb, and to his dear sister, if she be in a state to receive such communications from her friends. I hope Mr. Rogers is well; give my kindest regards to him also.

'Ever, my dear Mr. Moxon,

'Faithfully yours,

'W. Wordsworth.'

To the Rev. Alexander Dyce.

'*Rydal Mount, Dec.* 4, 1833.

'My dear Sir,

'Your elegant volume of Sonnets,[1] which you did me the honour to dedicate to me, was received a few months after the date of the accompanying letter; and the copy for Mr. Southey was forwarded immediately, as you may have learned long ago, by a letter from himself. Supposing you might not be returned from Scotland, I have

[1] Specimens of English Sonnets. — *A. D.*

deferred offering my thanks for this mark of your attention; and about the time when I should otherwise probably have written, I was seized with an inflammation in my eyes, from the *effects* of which I am not yet so far recovered as to make it prudent for me to use them in writing or reading.[1]

'The selection of sonnets appears to me to be very judicious. If I were inclined to make an exception, it would be in the single case of the sonnet of Coleridge upon "Schiller," which is too much of a rant for my taste. The one by him upon "Linley's Music" is much superior in execution; indeed, as a strain of feeling, and for unity of effect, it is very happily done. I was glad to see Mr. Southey's "Sonnet to Winter." A lyrical poem of my own, upon the disasters of the French army in Russia, has so striking a resemblance to it, in contemplating winter under two aspects, that, in justice to Mr. Southey, who preceded me, I ought to have acknowledged it in a note; and I shall do so upon some future occasion.

'How do you come on with Skelton? And is there any prospect of a new edition of your "Specimens of British Poetesses?" If I could get at the original works of the elder poetesses, such as the Duchess of Newcastle, Mrs. Behn, Orinda, &c., I should be happy to assist you with my judgment in such a publication, which, I think, might be made still more interesting than this first edition, especially if more matter were crowded into a page. The two volumes of "Poems by Eminent Ladies," Helen Maria Williams's works, Mrs. Smith's Sonnets, and Lady Winchelsea's Poems, form the scanty materials which I possess for assisting such a publication.

[1] This letter is in the handwriting of Miss D. Wordsworth, but signed by Mr. W.— *A. D.*

'It is a remarkable thing, that the two best ballads, perhaps of modern times, viz., "Auld Robin Gray" and the "Lament for the Defeat of the Scots at Flodden-field," are both from the pens of females.

'I shall be glad to hear that your health is improved, and your spirits good, so that the world may continue to be benefited by your judicious and tasteful labours.

'Pray let me hear from you at your leisure; and believe me, dear Sir,

'Very faithfully yours,

'W. WORDSWORTH.

'*P. S.* It is a pity that Mr. Hartley Coleridge's Sonnets* had not been published before your collection was made, as there are several well worthy of a place in it. Last midsummer, I made a fortnight's tour in the Isle of Man, Staffa, Iona, &c., which produced between thirty and forty sonnets, some of which, I think, would please you.

'Could not you contrive to take the Lakes in your way, sometimes, to or from Scotland? I need not say how glad I should be to see you for a few days.

'What a pity that Mr. Heber's wonderful collection of books is about to be dispersed!'

To Mrs. Hemans.

'*Rydal Mount, April*, 1834.

'My dear Mrs. Hemans,

. . . . . .

'You have submitted what you intended as a dedication of your poems to me. I need scarcely say that, as a

* [See these and other sonnets in the recent posthumous publication, 'Poems by Hartley Coleridge, with a Memoir of his Life by his Brother, 1851.' — H. R.]

private letter, such expressions from such a quarter could not have been received by me but with pleasure of *no ordinary kind*, unchecked by any consideration but the fear that my writings were overrated by you, and my character thought better of than it deserved. But I must say, that a *public* testimony, in so high a strain of admiration, is what I cannot but shrink from: be this modesty true or false, it is in me; you must bear with it, and make allowance for it. And, therefore, as you have submitted the whole to my judgment, I am emboldened to express a wish that you would, instead of this dedication, in which your warm and kind heart has overpowered you, simply inscribe them to me, with such expression of respect or gratitude as would come within the limits of the rule which, after what has been said above, will naturally suggest itself. Of course, if the sheet has been struck off, I must hope that my shoulders may become a little more Atlantean than I now feel them to be.

'My sister is not quite so well. She, Mrs. W., and Dora, all unite with me in best wishes and kindest remembrances to yourself and yours; and

'Believe me, dear Mrs. Hemans,

'To remain faithfully yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

To Lieutenant-General Sir William M. Gomm.

'*Rydal Mount, April* 16, 1834.

'My dear Sir,

'Your verses, for which I sincerely thank you, are an additional proof of the truth which forced from me, many years ago, the exclamation, "O, many are the poets that are sown by nature!"[1] The rest of that paragraph also

[1] Excursion, book i.

has some bearing upon your position in the poetical world. The thoughts and images through both the poems, and the feelings also, are eminently such as become their several subjects; but it would be insincerity were I to omit adding, that there is here and there a want of that skill in *workmanship*, which I believe nothing but continued practice in the art can bestow. I have used the word *art*, from a conviction, which I am called upon almost daily to express, that poetry is infinitely more of an art than the world is disposed to believe. Nor is this any dishonour to it; both for the reason that the poetic faculty is not rarely bestowed, and for this cause, also, that men would not be disposed to ascribe so much to inspiration, if they did not feel how near and dear to them poetry is.

'With sincere regards and best wishes to yourself and Lady Gomm,

'Believe me to be very sincerely yours,

'W. WORDSWORTH.'

On the 25th July, 1834, Samuel Taylor Coleridge died. In Wordsworth's language,[1]

'the mortal power of Coleridge
Was frozen at its marvellous source.'

The impressions produced at Rydal by the intelligence of this event are described as follows, by a friend who was then present.

Extract from a Letter to a Friend, written by R. P. G.[2]

'The death of Coleridge was announced to us by his

[1] Vol. v. p. 146.

[2] The Rev. Robert Perceval Graves, to whom the writer of this Memoir is indebted for much interesting information, especially in reference to Mr. Wordsworth's friendship with Mrs. Hemans.

friend Wordsworth. It was the Sunday evening after the event occurred that my brother and I walked over to the Mount, where we found the Poet alone. One of the first things we heard from him was the death of one who had been, he said, his friend for more than thirty years. He then continued to speak of him; called him the most *wonderful* man that he had ever known — wonderful for the originality of his mind, and the power he possessed of throwing out in profusion grand central truths from which might be evolved the most comprehensive systems. Wordsworth, as a poet, regretted that German metaphysics had so much captivated the taste of Coleridge, for he was frequently not intelligible on this subject; whereas, if his energy and his originality had been more exerted in the channel of poetry, an instrument of which he had so perfect a mastery, Wordsworth thought he might have done more permanently to enrich the literature, and to influence the thought of the nation, than any man of the age. As it was, however, he said he believed Coleridge's mind to have been a widely fertilizing one, and that the seed he had so lavishly sown in his conversational discourses, and the Sibylline leaves (not the poems so called by him) which he had scattered abroad so extensively covered with his annotations, had done much to form the opinions of the highest-educated men of the day; although this might be an influence not likely to meet with adequate recognition. After mentioning, in answer to our inquiries about the circumstances of their friendship, that though a considerable period had elapsed during which they had not seen much of each other, Coleridge and he had been, for more than two years, uninterruptedly, in as close intimacy as man could be with man, he proceeded to read to us the letter from Henry Nelson Coleridge which conveyed the tidings of his great relation's

death, and of the manner of it. It appeared that his death was a relief from intense pain, which, however, subsided at the interval of a few days before the event; and that shortly after this cessation of agony, he fell into a comatose state. The most interesting part of the letter was the statement, that the last use he made of his faculties was to call his children and other relatives and friends around him, to give them his blessing, and to express his hope to them that the manner of his end might manifest the depth of his trust in his Saviour Christ. As I heard this, I was at once deeply glad at the substance, and deeply affected by Wordsworth's emotion in reading it. When he came to this part his voice at first faltered, and then broke; but soon divine faith that the change was a blest one overcame aught of human grief, and he concluded in an equable though subdued tone. Before I quit this subject, I will tell you what I was interested in hearing from a person of the highest abilities, whom I had the good fortune of meeting at Rydal Mount. He said that he had visited Coleridge about a month before his death, and had perceived at once his countenance pervaded by a most remarkable serenity. On being congratulated on his appearance, Coleridge replied that he did now, for the first time, begin to hope, from the mitigation of his pains, that his health was undergoing a permanent improvement (alas! he was deceived; yet may we not consider this hopeful feeling, which is, I believe by no means uncommon, to be under such circumstances a valuable blessing?); but that what he felt most thankful for was the deep, calm, peace of mind which he then enjoyed; a peace such as he had never before experienced, or scarcely hoped for. This, he said, seemed now settled upon him; and all things were thus looked at by him through an atmosphere by which all were *reconciled and harmonized.*'

To Mrs. Hemans.

'*Rydal Mount, Sept.* 1834.

'My dear Mrs. Hemans,

'I avail myself gladly of the opportunity of Mr. Graves's return, to acknowledge the honour you have done me in prefixing my name to your volume of beautiful poems, and to thank you for the copy you have sent me with your own autograph. Where there is so much to admire, it is difficult to select; and therefore I shall content myself with naming only two or three pieces. And, first, let me particularize the piece that stands second in the volume, "Flowers and Music in a sick Room." This was especially touching to me, on my poor sister's account, who has long been an invalid, confined almost to her chamber. The feelings are sweetly touched throughout this poem, and the imagery very beautiful; above all, in the passage where you describe the colour of the petals of the wild rose. This morning, I have read the stanzas upon "Elysium" with great pleasure. You have admirably expanded the thought of Chateaubriand. If we had not been disappointed in our expected pleasure of seeing you here, I should have been tempted to speak of many other passages and poems with which I have been delighted.

'Your health, I hope,[1] is by this time re-established.

[1] This hope, alas! was not realized. Mrs. Hemans died in the following year, May 16, 1835.*

* ['Mourn rather for that holy Spirit,
Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep;
For Her who, ere her summer faded,
Has sunk into a breathless sleep.'
Vol. v. p. 147. — H. R.]

Your son, Charles, looks uncommonly well, and we have had the pleasure of seeing him and his friends several times; but as you are aware, we are much engaged with visitors at this season of the year, so as not always to be able to follow our inclinations as to whom we would wish to see. I cannot conclude without thanking you for your Sonnet upon a place so dear to me as Grasmere: it is worthy of the subject. With kindest remembrances, in which unite Mrs. W., my sister, and Dora, I remain, dear Mrs. Hemans,

'Your much obliged friend,

'Wm. Wordsworth.

'I have written very hastily to spare my eyes; a liberty which you will excuse.'

To the Venerable Archdeacon Wrangham.

'*Rydal Mount, Feb.* 2, 1835.

'My dear Wrangham,

'Sincere thanks are due from me for the attention you paid to Mrs. W.'s letter, written during my absence. You know the favourable opinion I entertain of Mr. Graves; and I was under a promise to let him know, if any vacancy occurred in the neighbourhood, and to do all I could, without infringing upon prior or stronger claims, to promote the attainment of his wishes. . . . .

'The mind of every thinking man who is attached to the Church of England must at this time be especially turned to reflections upon all points of ecclesiastical polity, government, and management, which may tend to strengthen the Establishment in the affections of the people, and enlarge the sphere of its efficiency. It cannot, then, I feel, be impertinent in me, though a layman,

to express upon this occasion my satisfaction, qualified as it is by what has been said above, in finding from this instance that our diocesan is unwilling to station clergymen in cures with which they are locally connected. Some years ago, when the present Bishop of London, then of Chester, was residing in this neighbourhood, I took the liberty of strenuously recommending to him not to ordain young men to curacies where they had been brought up, or in the midst of their own relatives. I had seen too much of the mischief of this, especially as affecting the functions and characters of ministers born and bred up in the lower classes of society. It has been painful to me to observe the false position, as the French would call it, in which men so placed are. Their habits, their manners, and their talk, their acquaintanceships, their friendships, and, let me say, their domestic affections, naturally and properly draw them one way, while their professional obligations point out another; and, accordingly, if they are sensible of both, they live in a perpetual conflict, and are liable to be taxed with pride and ingratitude, as seeming to neglect their old friends, when they only associate with them with that reserve, and under those restraints, which their sacred profession enjoins. If, on the other hand, they fall into unrestrained familiarity with the associates of their earlier life and boyish days, how injurious to their ministry such intercourse would be, must flash upon every man's mind whose thoughts have turned for a moment to the subject. Allow me to add a word upon the all-important matter of testimonials. The case of the Rector of —— and of —— presses it closely upon my mind. Had the individuals who signed those documents been fitly impressed with the awfulness of the act they were about to engage in, they could not have undertaken it. . . . Would it not be a good plan for

bishops to exclude testimonials from relatives and near connections? It is painful to notice what a tendency there is in men's minds to allow even a slight call of private regard to outweigh a very strong claim of duty to the public, and not less in sacred concerns than in civil.

'Your hands, my dear friend, have failed, as well as my eyes, so that we are neither of us in very flourishing trim for active correspondence: be assured, however, I participate the feelings you express. Last year has robbed me of Coleridge, of Charles Lamb,* James Losh, Rudd, of Trinity, Fleming, just gone, and other schoolfellows and contemporaries. I cannot forget that Shakspeare, who scarcely survived fifty (I am now near the close of my sixty-fifth year), wrote,

> "In me that time of life thou dost behold,
> When yellow leaves, or few, or none, do hang
> Upon the bough."

'How much more reason have we to break out into such a strain! Let me hear from you from time to time; I shall feel a lively interest in all that concerns you. I remain faithfully yours,

'W. W.'

To the Rev. Robert Montgomery.

'*Feb.* 1835.

'My dear Sir,

'On my return home, after an absence of some length, I have had the pleasure of receiving your two volumes.

* [—— 'Lamb, the frolic and the gentle
Has vanished from his lonely hearth.' — Vol. v. p. 146.

See also the poem, composed in this year, entitled 'Written after the Death of Charles Lamb'; and beginning, 'To a good Man of most dear memory.' Vol. v. p. 141. — H. R.]

. . . . . .

'With your "Omnipresence of the Deity"[1] I was acquainted long ago, having read it and other parts of your writings with much pleasure, though with some abatement, such as you yourself seem sufficiently aware of, and which, in the works of so young a writer, were by me gently judged, and in many instances regarded, though in themselves faults, as indications of future excellence. In your letter, for which also I thank you, you allude to your Preface, and desire to know if my opinion concurs with yours on the subject of sacred poetry. That Preface has been read to me, and I can answer in the affirmative; but at the same time allow me frankly to tell you that what *most* pleased me in that able composition is to be found in the few concluding paragraphs, beginning "It is now seven years since," &c.

. . . . . .

'I cannot conclude without one word of literary advice, which I hope you will deem my advanced age entitles me to give. Do not, my dear Sir, be anxious about any individual's opinion concerning your writings, however highly you may think of his genius or rate his judgment. Be a severe critic to yourself; and depend upon it no person's decision upon the merit of your works will bear comparison in point of value with your own. You must be conscious from what feeling they have flowed, and how far they may or may not be allowed to claim, on that account, permanent respect; and, above all, I would remind you, with a view to tranquillize and steady your mind, that no

[1] Mr. Montgomery informs me that 'this poem, when forwarded to Mr. Wordsworth, was not in the condition in which it is now, but that it has been almost rewritten, and was also his earliest poem — composed when he was nineteen.'

man takes the trouble of surveying and pondering another's writings with a hundredth part of the care which an author of sense and genius will have bestowed upon his own. Add to this reflection another, which I press upon you, as it has supported me through life, viz., that Posterity will settle all accounts justly, and that works which deserve to last will last; and if undeserving this fate, the sooner they perish the better.

'Believe me to be faithfully,

'Your much obliged,

'W. WORDSWORTH.'

In the year 1836 Mr. Wordsworth took an active part in an endeavour to build a new church in his native town of Cockermouth. The late Earl of Lonsdale offered to endow this proposed church with 150*l.* per annum, and authorized Mr. Wordsworth to communicate his benevolent offer to those who were interested in the undertaking. Some progress was made towards raising the requisite sum for the fabric. The following letter was addressed by him to an able and zealous promoter of the design, who wrote to Mr. Wordsworth on the subject of the patronage of the incumbency.

To James Stanger, Esq.

'My dear Sir,

'The obstacle arising out of conflicting opinions in regard to the patronage, one must be prepared for in every project of this kind. Mutual giving-way is indispensable, and I hope it will not ultimately be wanting in this case.

'The point immediately to be attended to is the raising

a sufficient sum to insure from the Church Building Societies a portion of the surplus fund which they have at command, and which I know, on account of claims from many places, they are anxious to apply as speedily as possible. If time be lost, that sum will be lost to Cockermouth.

'In the question of the patronage as between the bishop and the people, I entirely concur with you in preference of the former. Such is now the force of public opinion, that bishops are not likely to present upon merely selfish considerations; and if the judgment of one be not good, that of his successor may make amends, and probably will. But elections of this sort, when vested in the inhabitants, have, as far as my experience goes, given rise to so many cabals and manœuvres, and caused such enmities and heart-burnings, that Christian charity has been driven out of sight by them: and how often, and how soon, have the successful party been seen to repent of their own choice!

'The course of public affairs being what it is in respect to the Church, I cannot reconcile myself to delay from a hope of succeeding at another time. If we can get a new church erected at Cockermouth, great will be the benefit, with the blessing of God, to that place; and our success cannot, I trust, but excite some neighbouring places to follow the example.

'The little that I can do in my own sphere shall be attempted immediately, with especial view to insure the co-operation of the societies. Happy should I be if you and other gentlemen would immediately concur in this endeavour.

'I remain, &c.

'Wm. Wordsworth.'

'*Rydal Mount, Jan.* 1836.

'My dear C——,

. . . . . .

'Now let me tell you, but more for your father's sake than yours, that in a letter which I received from Lord Lonsdale yesterday he generously proposes to endow a new church at Cockermouth with 150*l.* per annum. From a conversation with him in the autumn, I expected he would do as much, though he did not then permit me, as he has done now, to mention it publicly.'

The year 1836 was saddened by the death of one who had long been a cherished inmate of Mr. Wordsworth's house — his wife's sister, Miss Sarah Hutchinson, a person of cultivated mind, sound judgment, refined taste, tender affections, firm religious principle, and fervent piety.

To her the Poet addressed the lines,

'Excuse is needless when with love sincere
Of occupation, not by fashion led,
Thou turn'st the wheel that slept with dust o'erspread;
My nerves from no such murmur shrink, — tho' near,
Soft as the Dorhawk's to a distant ear,
When twilight-shades darken the mountain's head.
Even She who toils to spin our vital thread
Might smile on work, O Lady, once so dear
To household virtues.' [1]

A short and pathetic poem from her pen is inserted in his works;[2] and after her death he gave her name, and that of her sister, to two neighbouring heights near his own residence.[3]

[1] Vol. ii. p. 270.
[2] To a Redbreast, Vol. v. p. 19.
[3] Vol. ii. p. 12.

'I, a witness
And frequent sharer of their calm delight
With thankful heart, to either Eminence
Gave the baptismal name each Sister bore.
Now are they parted, far as Death's cold hand
Hath power to part the Spirits of those who love
As they did love. Ye kindred Pinnacles —
That, while the generations of mankind
Follow each other to their hiding-place
In time's abyss, are privileged to endure
Beautiful in yourselves, and richly graced
With like command of beauty — grant your aid
For MARY's humble, SARAH's silent, claim,
That their pure joy in nature may survive
From age to age in blended memory.'

A stone in Grasmere churchyard, inscribed to her memory, records the feelings of love with which she was regarded, and expresses a wish which has now in part been fulfilled.

'Near the graves of two young children,
Removed from a family to which through life she was devoted,

Here lies the body
of
SARAH HUTCHINSON,
The beloved Sister and faithful Friend
Of Mourners, who have caused this Stone to be erected,
With an earnest wish that their own Remains
May be laid by her side, and a humble hope,
That, through CHRIST, they may together
Be made Partakers of the same Blessed Resurrection.
She was born at Penrith, 1st Jan. 1775;
And died at Rydal, 23d June, 1836.'

CHAPTER LI.

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES, 1836.

Among the communications in reference to Mr. Wordsworth, with which the author of these Memoirs has been favoured, the following has been received from a person of extensive learning, hereditary ability, and literary attainments, that shed a lustre on the judicial station which he fills with so much benefit to the public.

These Reminiscences being intended as private memoranda, were noted down in a familiar style.

The Hon. Mr. Justice Coleridge* thus writes:

* [It is agreeable to remember here that the writer of these thoughtful reminiscences, — who, by his judicial character, has added a new distinction to the Coleridge name, — was in former years that successor of Mr. Gifford in the Editorship of the Quarterly Review, of whom Southey, writing to his American friend Mr. Ticknor, said, '* * * Gifford has finally given up the Quarterly Review, and after the forthcoming number, it will be under John Coleridge's management. This is a matter which I have had very much at heart, that there might be an end of that mischievous language concerning your country. I opposed it always with all my might. * * * You may be assured that it has occasioned almost as much disgust here as in America. So far is it from being the language or the wish of the government, that one of the cabinet ministers complained of it to me as most mischievous, and most opposite to the course which they were desirous of pursuing. There is an end of it now, and henceforth that journal will do all in its power towards establishing that feeling which

'In the summer of 1836, I went on the Northern Circuit with Baron Parke. We took Bowness and Storrs, in our way from Appleby to Lancaster; and I visited Wordsworth, and my dear friend Arnold, from Storrs. It was my fortune to have to try the great Hornby Castle cause, as it was called: this I did at the end of the circuit, returning from Liverpool to Lancaster for the purpose. Arnold was kind enough to lend me his house (Foxhow*) for the vacation; and when the circuit ended, my wife and children accompanied me to it, and we remained there six weeks. During that time Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth were our only neighbours, and we scarcely saw any one besides;

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ought to exist between the two nations.' Letter to George Ticknor, Esq., Dec. 30, 1824. 'Life and Correspondence' of Southey, Vol. v. Ch. XXVIII. p. 194.

The reader of the Life of Dr. Arnold will not have forgotten the valuable reminiscences, which Mr. Justice Coleridge, in like manner, contributed to that biography. Some reminiscences of his uncle, S. T. Coleridge, were also given in Vol. II. of the 'Table-Talk'; in which volume also appeared, simply with the signature 'J. T. C.' his fine metrical version of a choric ode in the '*Hecuba*.' — H. R.]

* [See Stanley's Life of Arnold — the letters *passim* — for expressions of the increased interest which near neighbourhood to Wordsworth, and intercourse with him gave Dr. Arnold in his holiday-home, 'Foxhow': — 'I could still rave about Rydal,' he writes in 1832, — 'it was a period of five weeks of almost awful happiness, absolutely without a cloud. * * Our intercourse with the Wordsworths was one of the brightest spots of all, nothing could exceed their friendliness — and my almost daily walks with him were things not to be forgotten.' Again, in 1833, 'The Wordsworths' friendship, for so I may call it, is certainly one of the greatest delights of Foxhow.' And in 1841, about a twelvemonth before his death, after speaking of Southey, he adds, 'Wordsworth is in body and mind still sound and vigorous; it is beautiful to see and hear him.' — H. R.]

but we needed no other addition to the lovely and loveable country in which we were. He was extremely kind, both in telling us where to go, and very often going with us. He was engaged in correcting the press for a new edition of his poems. The London post, I think, went out at two P. M., and then, he would say, he was at our service. A walk with him in that country was a real treat: I never met with a man who seemed to know a country and the people so well, or to love them better, nor one who had such exquisite taste for rural scenery: he had evidently cultivated it with great care; he not only admired the beauties, but he could tell you what were the peculiar features in each scene, or what the incidents to which it owed its peculiar charm. He combined, beyond any man with whom I ever met, the unsophisticated poetic delight in the beauties of nature with a somewhat artistic skill in developing the sources and conditions of them. In examining the parts of a landscape he would be minute; and he dealt with shrubs, flower-beds, and lawns with the readiness of a practised landscape-gardener. His own little grounds afforded a beautiful specimen of his skill in this latter respect; and it was curious to see how he had imparted the same faculty in some measure to his gardener —James Dixon, I think, was his name. I found them together one morning in the little lawn by the mount. "James and I," said he, "are in a puzzle here. The grass here has spots which offend the eye; and I told him we must cover them with soap-lees. 'That,' he says, 'will make the green there darker than the rest.' 'Then,' I said, 'we must cover the whole.' He objected: 'That will not do with reference to the little lawn to which you pass from this.' 'Cover that,' I said. To which he replies, 'You will have an unpleasant contrast with the foliage surrounding it.'"

'Beside this warm feeling and exquisite taste, which made him so delightful a guide, his favourite spots had a human interest engrafted on them, — some tradition, some incident, some connection with his own poetry, or himself, or some dear friend. These he brought out in a striking way. Apart from these, he was well pleased to discourse on poetry or poets; and here appeared to me to be his principal scholarship. He was extremely well read in English poetry; and he would in his walk review a poem or a poet with admirable precision and fairness. He did not intrude his own poetry or himself, but he did not decline to talk about either; and he spoke of both simply, unboastingly, and yet with a manly consciousness of their worth. It was clear he thought he had achieved a high place among poets: it had been the aim of his life, humanly speaking; and he had taken worthy pains to accomplish and prepare himself for the enterprise. He never would sacrifice anything he thought right on reflection, merely to secure present popularity, or avert criticism which he thought unfounded; but he was a severe critic on himself, and would not leave a line or an expression with which he was dissatisfied until he had brought it to what he liked. He thought this due to the gift of poetry and the character of the poet. Carelessness in the finish of composition he seemed to look on almost as an offence. I remember well, that after speaking with love and delight of a very popular volume of poetry, he yet found great fault with the want of correctness and finish. Reciting one of the poems, and pointing out inaccuracies in it, he said, "I like the volume so much, that, if I was the author, I think I should never rest till I had nearly rewritten it." No doubt he carried this in his own case to excess, when he corrected so largely, in the decline of life, poems written in early manhood, under a state of feelings and powers

which it was impossible to reproduce, and yet which was necessary, generally speaking, for successful alteration. I cannot but agree with many who think that on this account the earlier copies of his poems are more valuable than the later.'

'1836. *September.* Wednesday 21. — Wordsworth and I started in my carriage for Lowther, crossed Kirkstone to Paterdale, by Ullswater, going through the Glenridding Walks,[1] and calling at Hallsteads. We reached the castle time enough before dinner, for him to give me a walk.

'After luncheon, on Thursday 22d, we had an open carriage, and proceeded to Haweswater. It is a fine lake, entirely unspoiled by bad taste. On one side the bank rises high and steep, and is well clothed with wood; on the other it is bare and more sloping. Wordsworth conveyed a personal interest in it to me, by telling me that it was the first lake which my uncle[2] had seen on his coming into this country: he was in company with Wordsworth and his brother John. Wordsworth pointed out to

[1] I remember well, asking him if we were not trespassing on private pleasure-grounds here. He said, no; the walks had, indeed, been enclosed, but he remembered them open to the public, and he always went through them when he chose. At Lowther, we found among the visitors, the late Lord W———; and describing our walk, *he* made the same observation, that we had been trespassing; but Wordsworth maintained his point with somewhat more warmth than I either liked, or could well account for. But afterwards, when we were alone, he told me he had purposely answered Lord W——— stoutly and warmly, because he had done a similar thing with regard to some grounds in the neighbourhood of Penrith, and excluded the people of Penrith from walking where they had always enjoyed the right before. He had evidently a pleasure in vindicating these rights, and seemed to think it a duty. — *J. T. C.*

[2] See above, Vol. I. p. 149, 150.

me somewhere about the spot on the hill-side, a little out of the track, from which they first saw the lake; and said, he well remembered how his face brightened, and how much delight he appeared to feel. Yesterday morning we returned to this place. We called on our way and took our luncheon at Hallsteads, and also called at Paterdale Hall. At both it was gratifying to see the cordial manner of W.'s reception: he seemed loved and honoured; and his manner was of easy, hearty, kindness to them.

'My tour with him was very agreeable, and I wish I could preserve in my memory more of his conversation than I shall be able to do. I was anxious to get from him anecdotes of himself and my uncle, and of their works. He told me of himself, that his first verses were a Popian copy, written at school, on the "Pleasure of Change;" then he wrote another on the "Second Centenary of the School's Foundation;" that he had written these verses on the holidays, and on the return to school; that he was rather the poet of the school. The first verses from which he remembered to have received great pleasure, were Miss Carter's "Poem on Spring," a poem in the six-line stanza, which he was particularly fond of, and had composed much in, for example, "Ruth." He said there was some foundation in fact, however slight, for every poem he had written of a narrative kind; so slight indeed, sometimes, as hardly to deserve the name; for example, "The Somnambulist" was wholly built on the fact of a girl at Lyulph's Tower, being a sleep-walker; and "The Water Lily," on a ship bearing that name. "Michael" was founded on the son of an old couple having become dissolute, and run away from his parents; and on an old shepherd having been seven years in building up a sheep-fold in a solitary valley: "The Brothers," on a young shepherd, in his sleep, having fallen down a crag, his staff

remaining suspended midway. Many incidents he seemed to have drawn from the narration of Mrs. Wordsworth, or his sister, "Ellen," for example, in "The Excursion;" and they must have told their stories well, for he said his principle had been to give the oral part as nearly as he could in the very words of the speakers, where he narrated a real story, dropping, of course, all vulgarisms or provincialisms, and borrowing sometimes a Bible turn of expression: these former were mere accidents, not essential to the truth, in representing how the human heart and passions worked; and to give these last faithfully, was his object. If he was to have any name hereafter, his hope was on this, and he did think he had in some instances succeeded;[1] that the sale of his poems increased among the classes below the middle; and he had had, constantly, statements made to him of the effect produced in reading "Michael," and other such of his poems. I added my testimony of being unable to read it aloud, without interruption from my own feelings. "She was a phantom of delight," he said was written on "his dear wife," of whom he spoke in the sweetest manner; a manner full of the warmest love and admiration, yet with delicacy and reserve. He very much and repeatedly regretted that my

[1] You could not walk with him a mile without seeing what a loving interest he took in the play and working of simple natures. As you ascend Kirkstone from Paterdale, you have a bright stream leaping down from rock to rock, on your right, with here and there silent pools. One of Wordsworth's poor neighbours worked all the week over Kirkstone, I think in some mines; and returning on Saturday evenings, used to fish up this little stream. We met him with a string of small trout. W. offered to buy them; and bid him take them to the Mount. 'Nay,' said the man, 'I cannot sell them, Sir; the little children at home look for them for supper, and I can't disappoint them.' It was quite pleasant to see how the man's answer delighted the Poet. — *J. T. C.*

uncle had written so little verse; he thought him so eminently qualified, by his very nice ear, his great skill in metre, and his wonderful power and happiness of expression. He attributed, in part, his writing so little, to the extreme care and labour which he applied in elaborating his metres. He said, that when he was intent on a new experiment in metre, the time and labour he bestowed were inconceivable; that he was quite an epicure in sound. Latterly he thought he had so much acquired the habit of analyzing his feelings, and making them matter for a theory or argument, that he had rather dimmed his delight in the beauties of nature, and injured his poetical powers. He said he had no idea how "Christabelle" was to have been finished, and he did not think my uncle had ever conceived, in his own mind, any definite plan for it; that the poem had been composed while they were in habits of daily intercourse, and almost in his presence, and when there was the most unreserved intercourse between them as to all their literary projects and productions, and he had never heard from him any plan for finishing it. Not that he doubted my uncle's *sincerity* in his subsequent assertions to the contrary: because, he said, schemes of this sort passed rapidly and vividly through his mind, and so impressed him, that he often fancied he had arranged things, which really, and upon trial, proved to be mere embryos. I omitted to ask him, what seems obvious enough now, whether, in conversing about it, he had never asked my uncle how it would end. The answer would have settled the question. He regretted that the story had not been made to end the same night in which it begun. There was difficulty and danger in bringing such a personage as the witch to the daylight, and the breakfast-table; and unless the poem was to have been long enough to give time for creating a second interest, there was a great prob-

ability of the conclusion being flat after such a commencement.

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'A great number of my uncle's sonnets, he said, were written from the "Cat and Salutation," or a public house with some such name, in Smithfield, where my uncle imprisoned himself for some time; and they appeared in a newspaper, I think he said the "Morning Chronicle."

'He remembered his writing a great part of the translation of "Wallenstein," and he said there was nothing more astonishing than the ease and rapidity with which it was done.

'*Sept.* 29, *Foxhow.* — We are just setting out, in a promising day, for a second trip to Keswick, intending, if possible, to penetrate into Wastdale, over the Sty Head. Before I go, I wish to commemorate a walk with the Poet, on a drizzly muddy day, the turf sponging out water at every step, through which he stalked as regardless as if he were of iron, and with the same fearless, unchanged pace over rough and smooth, slippery and sound. We went up by the old road[1] from Ambleside to Keswick, and struck off from the table-land on the left, over the fell ground, till he brought me out on a crag bounded, as it were, by two ascents, and showing me in front, as in a frame, Grasmere Lake, "the one green island," the

[1] This old road was very steep, after the fashion of former days, crossing the hill straight over its highest point. A new cut had been made, somewhat diminishing the steepness, but still leaving it a very inconvenient and difficult ascent. At length another alteration was made, and the road was carried on a level round the foot of the hill. My friend Arnold pointed these out to me, and, quizzing my politics, said, the first denoted the old Tory corruption, the second bit by bit, the third Radical Reform. — *J. T. C.*

church, village, &c., and the surrounding mountains. It is a lovely scene, strikingly described in his verses beginning,

> "When to the attractions of the busy world,
> Preferring studious leisure," &c. [1]

'*Oct. 7th.* — Yesterday Wordsworth drove me to Lowwovel; and then we ascended a great way towards Kirkstone by Troutbeck, passing by many interesting cots, barns, and farm-houses, where W. had constantly something to point out in the architecture, or the fringes of moss, fern, &c. on the roofs or walls. We crossed the valley, and descended on Troutbeck Church, whence we came down to the turnpike road, and I left the Poet, who was going on to assist Sir T. Pasley in laying out his grounds. I turned homeward, till I met my horse.

. . . . . .

'As we walked, I was admiring the never-ceasing sound of water, so remarkable in this country. "I was walking," he said, "on the mountains, with ——, the Eastern traveller; it was after rain, and the torrents were full. I said, 'I hope you like your companions — these bounding, joyous, foaming streams.' 'No,' said the traveller, pompously, 'I think they are not to be compared in delightful effect with the silent solitude of the Arabian Desert.' My mountain blood was up. I quickly observed that he had boots and a stout great-coat on, and said, 'I am sorry you don't like this; perhaps I can show you what will please you more.' I strode away, and led him from crag to crag, hill to vale, and vale to hill, for about six hours; till I thought I should have had to bring him home, he was so tired."

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[1] See Poems on the naming of Places, vol. iii. p. 9.

'*October 10th.* — I have passed a great many hours to-day with Wordsworth, in his house. I stumbled on him with proof-sheets before him. He read me nearly all the sweet stanzas written in his copy of the "Castle of Indolence,"[1] describing himself and my uncle; and he and Mrs. W. both assured me the description of the latter at that time was perfectly accurate; that he was almost as a great boy in feelings, and had all the tricks and fancies there described. Mrs. W. seemed to look back on him, and those times, with the fondest affection. Then he read me some lines, which formed part of a suppressed portion of "The Waggoner;" but which he is now printing "on the Rock of Names," so called because on it they had carved out their initials:

W. W. Wm. Wordsworth.
M. H. Mary W.
D. W. Dorothy Wordsworth.
S. T. C. Samuel Taylor Coleridge.
J. W. John Wordsworth.
S. H. Sarah Hutchinson.*

[1] Poems founded on the Affections, Vol. i. p. 211.

* [ROCK OF NAMES!
Light is the strain, but not unjust
To Thee, and thy memorial-trust
That once seemed only to express
Love that was love in idleness;
Tokens, as year hath followed year,
How changed, alas in character!
For they were graven on thy smooth breast
By hands of those my soul loved best;
Meek women, men as true and brave
As ever went to a hopeful grave:
Their hands and mine, when side by side
With kindred zeal and mutual pride,

'This rock was about a mile beyond Wythburn Chapel, to which they used to accompany my uncle, in going to Keswick from Grasmere, and where they would meet him when he returned. This led him to read much of "The Waggoner" to me. It seems a very favourite poem of his, and he read me splendid descriptions from it. He said his object in it had not been understood. It was a play of the fancy on a domestic incident and lowly character: he wished by the opening descriptive lines to put his reader into the state of mind in which he wished it to be read. If he failed in doing that, he wished him to lay it down. He pointed out, with the same view, the glowing lines on the state of exultation in which Ben and his companions are under the influence of liquor. Then he read the sickening languor of the morning walk, contrasted with the glorious uprising of Nature, and the songs of the birds. Here he has added about six most exquisite lines.*

'We walked out on the turf terrace, on the Loughrigg side of Rydal Water. Most exquisitely did the lake and

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We worked until the Initials took
Shapes that defied a scornful look. —
Long as for us a genial feeling
Survives, or one in need of healing,
The power, dear Rock, around thee cast,
Thy monumental power, shall last
For me and mine! O thought of pain,
That would impair it or profane!
Take all in kindness then, as said
With a staid heart but playful head;
And fail not Thou, loved Rock! to keep
Thy charge when we are laid asleep.'

Vol. II. p. 323. — H. R.]

* [See on this poem note at the end of this chapter. — H. R.]

opposite bank look. Thence he led me home under Loughrigg, through lovely spots I had never seen before. His conversation was on critical subjects, arising out of his attempts to alter his poems. He said he considered "The White Doe" as, in conception, the highest work he had ever produced. The mere physical action was all unsuccessful; but the true action of the poem was spiritual — the subduing of the will, and all inferior passions, to the perfect purifying and spiritualizing of the intellectual nature; while the Doe, by connection with Emily, is raised as it were from its mere animal nature into something mysterious and saint-like. He said he should devote much labour to perfecting the execution of it in the mere business parts, in which, from anxiety "to get on" with the more important parts, he was sensible that imperfections had crept in, which gave the style a feebleness of character.

'He talked of Milton, and observed how he sometimes indulged himself, in the "Paradise Lost," in lines which, if not in time, you could hardly call verse, instancing,

"And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old;"

and then noticing the sweet-flowing lines which followed, and with regard to which he had no doubt the unmusical line before had been inserted.

'"Paradise Regained" he thought the most perfect in *execution* of anything written by Milton; that and the "Merchant of Venice," in language, he thought were almost faultless: with the exception of some little straining in some of the speeches about the caskets, he said, they were perfect, the genuine English expressions of the ideas of their own great minds. Thomson he spoke of as a real poet, though it appeared less in his "Seasons"

than in his other poems. He had wanted some judicious adviser to correct his taste; but every person he had to deal with only served to injure it. He had, however, a true love and feeling for nature, and a greater share of poetical imagination, as distinguished from dramatic, than any man between Milton and him. As he stood looking at Ambleside, seen across the valley, embosomed in wood, and separated from us at sufficient distance, he quoted from Thomson's "Hymn on Solitude," and suggested the addition, or rather insertion, of a line at the close, where he speaks of glancing at London from Norwood. The line, he said, should have given something of a more favourable impression:

"Ambition ——[1] and pleasure vain."

'*October 14th, Foxhow.*—We have had a delightful day to-day. The weather being fine, Wordsworth agreed to go with us into Easedale; so we got three ponies, for Mary and Madge, and Fred and Alley, alternately, and walked from Grasmere, he *trudging*[2] before, with his green gauze shade over his eyes, and in his plaid jacket and waistcoat. First, he turned aside at a little farm-house, and took us into a swelling field, to look down on the tumbling stream which bounded it, and which we saw precipitated at a distance, in a broad white sheet, from the mountain. A beautiful water-break of the same stream was before us at our feet, and he noticed the connection which it formed in the landscape with the distant water-fall. Then, as he mused for an instant, he said, "I have often thought what a solemn thing it would be, if we could

[1] I cannot fill the blank.—*J. T. C.*

[2] I used the word *trudging* at the time; it denoted to me his bold way of walking.—*J. T. C.*

have brought to our mind, at once, all the scenes of distress and misery, which any spot, however beautiful and calm before us, has been witness to since the beginning. That water-break, with the glassy, quiet pool beneath it, that looks so lovely, and presents no images to the mind but of peace, — there, I remember, the only son of his father, a poor man, who lived yonder, was drowned. He missed him, came to search, and saw his body dead in the pool." We pursued our way up the stream, not a very easy way for the horses, near to the water-fall before mentioned, and so gradually up to the Tarn. Oh, what a scene! The day one of the softest and brightest in autumn; the lights various; the mountains in the richest colouring, fern covering them with reddish gold in great part; here and there, trees in every variety of autumn foliage; and the rock itself of a kind of lilac tint; the outlines of the mountains very fine; the Tarn, which might almost be called a lake for size and abundance of water, with no culture, or trees, or habitation around it, here and there a great rock stretching into it like a promontory, and high mountains surrounding it on three sides, on two of them almost precipitate; on the fourth side, it is more open, and on this the stream, crossed by four great stepping-stones, runs out of it, and descends into Grasmere vale and lake. He pointed out the precipitous mountain at the head of the Tarn, and told us an incident of his sister and himself coming from Langdale, which lies on the other side. He having for some reason parted, she encountered a fog, and was bewildered. At last, she sat down and waited; in a short time it began to clear; she could see that a valley was before her. In time, she saw the backs of cattle feeding, which emerged from the darkness, and at last the Tarn; and then found she had stopped providentially, and was sitting nearly on the edge of the precipice. Our

return was somewhat more perilous for the riders than the ascent; but we accomplished it safely, and, in our return, turned into Butterlip How, a circular, soft, green hill, surrounded with oak trees, at the head of the Grasmere. It is about twenty acres, and belongs to a London banker, purchased, as I suppose, with a view to building on it. It is a lovely spot for a house, with delicious views of the lake and church, Easedale, Helm Crag, &c. I have seen no place, I think, on which I should so much like to build my retreat.

'*October* 16*th.* — Since church we have taken our last walk with Wordsworth. M. was mounted on Dora W.'s pony. He led us up on Loughrigg, round to the Tarn, by the back of Loughrigg to the foot of Grasmere Lake, and so home by this side of Rydal; the weather warm and fine, and a lovely walk it was. The views of the mountains, Langdale Way, the Tarn itself and its banks, and the views on Grasmere and Rydal Waters, are almost beyond anything I have seen, even in this country.

'He and Mrs. W. came this evening to bid us farewell. We parted with great, I believe mutual, regret; certainly they have been kind to us in a way and degree which seemed unequivocally to testify good liking to us, and then it is impossible not to love. The more I have seen of Wordsworth, the more I admire him as a poet and as a man. He has the finest and most discriminating feeling for the beauties of nature that I ever witnessed; he expresses himself in glowing and yet manly language about them. There is much simplicity in his character, much *naïveté*, but it is all generous and highly moral.'

[The following criticism — worthy of the sire — from the pen of Mrs. H. N. Coleridge, is so finely in sympathy with the Poet's own feeling respecting 'The Waggoner,' as narrated above, and

so naturally connects with the valuable memorial, contributed by her brother-in-law, Sir John Taylor Coleridge, in this chapter, that it will not, I trust, be considered out of place here.

'Due honour is done to Peter Bell, at this time, by students of poetry in general; but some, even of Mr. Wordsworth's greatest admirers, do not quite satisfy me in their admiration of The Waggoner, a poem which my dear uncle, Mr. Southey, preferred even to the former. *Ich will meine Denkungsart hierin niemanden aufdringen*, as Lessing says; I will force my way of thinking on nobody, but take the liberty, for my own gratification, to express it. The sketches of hill and valley in this poem have a lightness and spirit, — an allegro touch, — distinguishing them from the grave and elevated splendour which characterizes Mr. Wordsworth's representations of nature in general, and from the pensive tenderness of those in The White Doe, while it harmonizes well with the human interest of the piece; indeed, it is the harmonious sweetness of the composition which is most dwelt upon by its special admirers. In its course it describes, with bold brief touches, the striking mountain tract from Grasmere to Keswick; it commences with an evening storm among the mountains, presents a lively interior of a country-inn during midnight, and concludes after bringing us in sight of St. John's Vale and the Vale of Keswick seen by day-break. — "Skiddaw touched with rosy light," and the prospect from Nathdale Fell, "hoar with the frost-like dews of dawn:" thus giving a beautiful and well contrasted panorama, produced by the most delicate and masterly strokes of the pencil. Well may Mr. Ruskin, a fine observer and eloquent describer of various classes of natural appearances, speak of Mr. Wordsworth as the great poetic landscape painter of the age. But Mr. Ruskin has found how seldom the great landscape painters are powerful in expressing human passions and affections on canvass, or even successful in the introduction of human figures into their foregrounds; whereas in the poetic paintings of Mr. Wordsworth, the landscape is always subordinate to a higher interest; certainly, in The Waggoner, the little sketch of human nature which occupies, as it were, the front of that encircling background, the picture of Benjamin and his temptations, his humble friends and the mute companions of his way, has a character of its own, combining with sportiveness, a homely pathos, which must ever be delightful to some of those

who are thoroughly conversant with the spirit of Mr. Wordsworth's poetry. It may be compared with the ale-house scene in Tam O'Shanter, parts of Voss's Luise, or Ovid's Baucis and Philemon; though it differs from each of them as much as they differ from each other. The Epilogue carries on the feeling of the piece very beautifully.' — *S. C.*

Coleridge's 'Biographia Literaria,' Edit. of 1847, Vol. II. p. 183, note. — H. R.]

CHAPTER LII.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY.[1]

'DURING my whole life,' says Mr. Wordsworth,[2] 'I had felt a strong desire to visit Rome, and the other celebrated cities and regions of Italy:' but prudential considerations, he added, delayed the execution of this wish till he was far advanced in years. 'My excellent friend, H. C. Robinson,[3] readily consented to accompany me, and in March,

[1] Vol. iii. p. 152–183. Published in a volume entitled 'Poems chiefly of early and late Years.' Lond. 1842.*

[2] MSS. I. F.

[3] I am indebted to Mr. Robinson's kindness for the communication of the following ITINERARY.

March, 1837.
19. By steam to Calais.
20. Posting to Samer.
21. Posting to Granvilliers.
22. Through Beauvais to Paris.
26. To Fontainbleau.
27. Through Nemours to Cosne.
28. To Moulins.
29. To Tarare.

March.
30. To Lyons.
31. Through Vienne to Tain.

April.
1. Through Valence to Orange.
2. To Avignon; to Vaucluse and back.
3 & 4. By Point du Gard to Nismes.

* [This volume formed a seventh volume to the collective edition of the Poetical Works which had been published in 1836–37, in six volumes. This was the first edition which contained a portrait of the poet: the engraving was from the likeness painted by Pickersgill for St. John's College, Cambridge. — H. R.]

1837, we set off from London, to which we returned in August, earlier than my companion wished, or I should

April.
5 & 6. By St. Remi to Marseilles.
7. To Toulon.
8. To Luc.
9. By Frejus to Cannes.
10 & 11. To Nice.
12. Through Mentone to St. Remo.
13. Through Finale to Savona.
14–16. To Genoa.
17. To Chiaveri.
18. To Spezia.
19. By Carrara to Massa.
20. To Lucca.
21. To Pisa.
22. To Volterra.
23. By Castiglonacco and Sienna —
24. To Radicofani.
25. By Aquapendente to Viterbo.
26. To Rome.

May.
13. Excursion to Tivoli with Dr. Carlyle.
17–21. Excursion to Albano, &c., &c., with Miss Mackenzie.
23. To Terni.
24. After seeing the Falls to Spoleto.
25. To Cortona and Perugia.
26. To Arezzo.
27. To Bibiena and Laverna.

May.
28. To Camaldoli.
29. From Muselea to Ponte Sieve.
30. From Ponte Sieve to Val Ombrosa and Florence.

June.
6 & 7. To Bologna.
8. Parma.
9. Through Piacenza to Milan.
11. To the Certosa and back.
12. To the Lake of Como and back.
13. To Bergamo.
14. To Palazuolla and Isco.
15. Excursion to Riveri and back.
16. To Brescia and Desinzano.
17. On Lake of Garda to Riva.
19. To Verona.
20. Vicenza.
21. Padua.
22. Venice.
28. To Logerone.
29. To Sillian.
30. Spittal (in Carinthia).

July.
1. Over Kazenberg to Tweng.
2. Through Werfen to Hallein.
3. Excursion to Königsee.
4 & 5. To Saltzburg.
6. To Ischl. A week's stay

myself have desired, had I been, like him, a bachelor. These Memorials of that tour touch upon but a few of the places and objects that interested me, and in what they do advert to are, for the most part, much slighter than I could wish. More particularly do I regret that there is no notice in them of the South of France, nor of the Roman antiquities abounding in that district, especially of the Pont Du Gard, which, together with its situation, impressed me full as much as any remains of Roman architecture to be found in Italy. Then there was Vaucluse, with its fountain, its Petrarch, its rocks of all sizes, its small plots of lawn in their first vernal freshness, and the blossoms of the peach and other trees, embellishing the scene on every side. The beauty of the stream also called forcibly for the expression of sympathy from one who from his childhood had studied the brooks and torrents of his native mountains. Between two and three hours did I run about, climbing the steep and rugged crags from whose base the

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July.
in the Salzkammer Gut, viz. —
8. Gmund.
9. Travenfalls and back.
10. Aussee.
11. Excursion to lakes, then to Hallstadt.
13. Through Ischl to St. Gilgin.
14. Through Salzburg to Trauenstein.
15. To Miesbach.
16. To Tegernsee and Holzkirken.
17. To Munich.
21. To Augsburg.
22. To Ulm.

July.
23. Stuttgard.
24. To Besigham.
25. To Heidelberg.
28. Through Worms to Mayence.
29. To Coblenz.
30. To Bonn.
31. Through Cologne to Aix-la-Chapelle.

Aug.
1. To Louvain.
2. To Brussels.
3. To Antwerp.
4. To Liege.
5. Through Lille to Cassell.
6. Calais.
7. London.

water of Vaucluse breaks forth. "Has Laura's plover," often said I to myself, "ever sat down upon this stone?" or has his foot ever "pressed this turf?" Some, especially of the female sex, would have felt sure of it; my answer was (impute it to my years), "I fear not." Is it not, in fact, obvious that many of his love verses must have flowed, I do not say from a wish to display his own talents, but from a habit of exercising his intellect in that way rather than from an impulse of his heart? It was otherwise with his Lyrical Poems, and particularly with the one upon the degradation of his country; there he pours out his reproaches, lamentations, and aspirations, like an ardent and sincere patriot. But enough, it is time to turn to my own effusions, such as they are.

'*Musings at Aquapendente, April*, 1837.[1] (The following note refers to Sir W. Scott.)

> "Had his sunk eye kindled at those dear words
> That spake of Bards and Minstrels."

His, Sir W. Scott's eye *did*, in fact, kindle at them, for the lines, "Places forsaken now," and the two that follow, were adopted from a poem of mine, which nearly forty years ago was in part read to him, and he never forgot them.

> "Old Helvellyn's brow,
> Where once together in his day of strength
> We stood rejoicing."[2]

Sir H. Davy was with us at the time. We had ascended from Paterdale, and I could not but admire the vigour with which Scott scrambled along that horn of the mountain, called "Striding Edge." Our progress was necessarily slow, and beguiled by Scott's telling many stories and

[1] Vol. iii. p. 154. [2] See above, Vol. I. p. 316.

amusing anecdotes, as was his custom. Sir H. Davy would have probably been better pleased, if other topics had been occasionally interspersed, and some discussion entered upon; at all events, he did not remain with us long at the top of the mountain, but left us to find our way down its steep side together into the vale of Grasmere, where, at my cottage, Mrs. Scott was to meet us at dinner.

> *"He stood*
> *A few short steps, painful they were, apart*
> *From Tasso's convent-haven and retired grave."* [1]

This, though introduced here, I did not know, till it was told me at Rome, by Miss Mackenzie, of Seaforth, a lady whose friendly attentions, during my residence at Rome, I have gratefully acknowledged with expressions of sincere regret that she is no more. Miss M. told me that she had accompanied Sir Walter to the Janicular Mount, and, after showing him the grave of Tasso, in the church upon the top, and a mural monument there erected to his memory, they left the church, and stood together on the brow of the hill overlooking the city of Rome. Sir Walter's daughter was with them, and she, naturally desirous, for the sake of Miss Mackenzie especially, to have some expression of pleasure from her father, half reproached him for showing nothing of that kind, either by his looks or voice. "How can I," replied he, "having only one leg to stand upon, and that in extreme pain?" so that the prophecy was more than fulfilled.'

Over waves rough and deep.[2] — 'We took boat near the lighthouse, at the point of the right horn of the bay, which makes a sort of natural port for Genoa; but the wind was high, and the waves long and rough, so that I

[1] Vol. iii. p. 155. [2] Vol. iii. p. 156. View of Genoa.

did not feel quite recompensed by the view of the city, splendid as it was, for the danger apparently incurred. The boatman (I had only one) encouraged me, saying, we were quite safe; but I was not a little glad when we gained the shore, though Shelley and Byron, one of them, at least, who seemed to have courted agitation from every quarter, would have probably rejoiced at such a situation. More than once, I believe, were they both in extreme danger, even on the Lake of Geneva. Every man, however, has his fears of one kind or other, and, no doubt, they had theirs. Of all men whom I have ever known, Coleridge had the most of passive courage in bodily trial, but no one was so easily cowed when moral firmness was required in miscellaneous conversation, or in the daily intercourse of social life." *

How lovely — didst thou appear, Savona.[1] — 'There is not a single bay along this beautiful coast, that might not raise in a traveller a wish to take up his abode there; each as it succeeds seems more inviting than the other; but the desolated convent on the cliff in the bay of Savona, struck my fancy most; and had I, for the sake of my own health, or of that of a dear friend, or any other cause, been desirous of a residence abroad, I should have let my thoughts loose upon a scheme of turning some part of this building into a habitation. There is close by it a row, or avenue (I forget which), of tall cypresses. I could not

[1] Vol. iii. p. 158.

* [In the words of his son-in-law and nephew, Henry Nelson Coleridge — 'He had indeed his peculiar weaknesses as well as his unique powers; sensibilities that an averted look would rack, a heart which would have beaten calmly in the tremblings of an earthquake.' Preface to the 'Table Talk of S. T. Coleridge,' p. 70. — H. R.]

forbear saying to myself, "What a sweet family walk, or one for lonely musings, would be found under the shade!" but there probably the trees remain little noticed, and seldom enjoyed.'

This flowering Broom's dear neighbourhood.[1] — 'The Broom is a great ornament through the months of March and April, to the vales and hills of the Apennines, in the wild part of which it blows in the utmost profusion, and of course successively at different elevations, as the season advances. It surpasses ours in beauty and fragrance;[2] but, speaking from my own limited observation only, I cannot affirm the same of several of their wild spring flowers, the primroses in particular, which I saw not unfrequently, but thinly scattered and languishing, as compared with ours.'

[1] Vol. iii. p. 163.

[2] With regard to *fragrance*, Mr. Wordsworth spoke from the testimony of *others*: he himself had *no sense of smell*. The single instance of his enjoying such a perception, which is recorded of him in Southey's life, was, in fact, imaginary. The incident occurred at Racedown, when he was walking with Miss H——, who coming suddenly upon a parterre of sweet flowers, expressed her pleasure at their fragrance, — a pleasure which he caught from her lips, and then fancied to be his own.*

* ['Wordsworth has no sense of smell. Once, and once only in his life, the dormant power was awakened; it was by a bed of stocks in full bloom, at a house which he inhabited in Dorsetshire, some five and twenty years ago; and he says it was like a vision of Paradise to him: but it lasted only a few minutes, and the faculty has continued torpid from that time. The fact is remarkable in itself, and would be worthy of notice, even if it did not relate to a man of whom posterity will desire to know all that can be remembered. He has often expressed to me his regret for this privation.' Southey's 'Life and Correspondence,' Vol. i. Chap. ix. p. 63. — H. R.]

SONNETS.

The Pine Tree of Monte Mario,[1] rescued by Sir G. Beaumont, from destruction.[2] — 'Sir G. Beaumont told me that when he first visited Italy, pine trees of this species abounded; but that on his return thither, which was more than thirty years after, they had disappeared from many places where he had been accustomed to admire them, and had become rare all over the country, especially in and about Rome. Several Roman villas have, within these few years, passed into hands of foreigners, who, I observed with pleasure, have taken care to plant this tree, which, in course of years, will become a great ornament to the city and to the general landscape.'

Is this, ye gods.[3] — '*Sight* is at first a sad enemy *to imagination*, and to those pleasures belonging to old times with which some exertions of that power will always mingle. Nothing perhaps brings this truth home to the feelings more than the city of Rome, not so much in respect to the impression made at the moment when it is first seen and looked at as a whole, for then the imagination may be invigorated, and the mind's eye quickened, to perceive as much as that of the imagination; but when particular spots or objects are sought out, disappointment is, I believe, invariably felt. Ability to recover from this

[1] Vol. iii. p. 162.

[2] 'Within a couple of hours of my arrival at Rome I saw from Monte Pincio the pine tree as described in this Sonnet; and while expressing admiration at the beauty of its appearance, I was told that a price had been paid for it by the late Sir G. Beaumont, upon condition that the proprietor would not act upon his known intention of cutting it down.' Printed note, Vol. iii. p. 249.

[3] Vol. iii. p. 163.

disappointment will exist in proportion to knowledge, and the power of the mind to reconstruct out of fragments and parts, and to make details in the present subservient to more adequate comprehension of the past.'

At Rome. '*They who have seen the noble Roman's scorn.*'[1] — 'I have a private interest in this sonnet, for I doubt whether it would ever have been written, but for the lively picture given me by Anna R—— of what they had witnessed of the indignation and sorrow expressed by some Italian nobleman of their acquaintance upon the surrender, which circumstances had obliged them to make, of the best portions of their family mansions to strangers.'

Cuckoo at Laverna. May 25th, 1837.[2] — 'Among a thousand delightful feelings connected in my mind with the voice of the cuckoo, there is a personal one which is rather melancholy. I was first convinced that age had rather dulled my hearing, by not being able to catch the sound at the same distance as the younger companions of my walks; and of this failure I had proof upon the occasion that suggested these verses. I did not hear the sound till Mr. Robinson had twice or thrice directed my attention to it.'

These verses appear to have been composed for the most part on the spot; but this was not the case with far the greater part of the 'Memorials.' Mr. Robinson has kindly communicated some reminiscences of this tour; and among these he records that Mr. Wordsworth trusted so confidently to the vividness of the impression of objects on his mind, that he *wrote nothing* at the time when they were actually present to his eye; and that, to

[1] Vol. iii. p. 166. [2] Vol. iii. p. 169.

the best of his belief, very few indeed of these poems were written on Italian ground.

To return to Mr. Wordsworth's own communications:

At Vallombrosa.[1] — 'I must confess, though of course I did not acknowledge it in the few lines I wrote in the strangers' book kept at the convent, that I was somewhat disappointed at Vallombrosa. I had expected, as the name implies, a deep and narrow valley, overshadowed by enclosing hills: but the spot where the convent stands is in fact not a valley at all, but a cove or crescent open to an extensive prospect. In the book before mentioned I read the notice in the English language, that if any one would ascend the steep ground above the convent, and wander over it, he would be abundantly rewarded by magnificent views. I had not time to act upon the recommendation, and only went with my young guide to a point, nearly on a level with the site of the convent, that overlooks the Vale of Arno for some leagues.

'To praise great and good men, has ever been deemed one of the worthiest employments of poetry; but the objects of admiration vary so much with time and circumstances, and the noblest of mankind have been found, when intimately known, to be of characters so imperfect, that no eulogist can find a subject which he will venture upon with the animation necessary to create sympathy, unless he confines himself to a particular act, or he takes something of a one-sided view of the person he is disposed to celebrate. This is a melancholy truth, and affords a strong reason for the poetic mind being chiefly exercised in works of fiction. The poet can then follow wherever the spirit of admiration leads him, unchecked by such suggestions as will be too apt to cross his way, if all that

[1] Vol. iii. p. 174.

he is prompted to utter, is to be tested by fact. Something in this spirit I have written in the note attached to the Sonnet on the King of Sweden; and many will think that in this poem, and elsewhere, I have spoken of the author of "Paradise Lost," in a strain of panegyric, scarcely justifiable by the tenor of some of his opinions, whether theological or political, and by the temper he carried into public affairs, in which, unfortunately for his genius, he was so much concerned.'

Sonnet at Florence.[1] '*Under the shadow of a stately pile.*'—'Upon what evidence the belief rests, that this stone was a favourite *seat* of Dante, I do not know; but a man would little consult his own interest as a traveller, if he should busy himself with doubts as to the fact. The readiness with which traditions of this character are received, and the fidelity with which they are preserved from generation to generation, are an evidence of feelings honourable to our nature. I remember now, during one of my rambles in the course of a college vacation, I was pleased at being shown at ——, a seat near a kind of rocky cell, at the source of the river ——, on which it was said that Congreve wrote his "Old Bachelor." One can scarcely hit on any performance less in harmony with the scene; but it was a local tribute paid to intellect by those who had not troubled themselves to estimate the moral worth of that author's comedies. And why should they? he was a man distinguished in his day, and the sequestered neighbourhood in which he often resided, was perhaps as proud of him as Florence of her Dante. It is the same feeling, though proceeding from persons one cannot bring together in this way, without offering some apology to the shade of the great visionary.'

[1] Vol. iii. p. 176.

The Baptist.[1]—'It was very hot weather during the week we stayed at Florence; and, having never been there before, I went through much hard service, and I am not, therefore, *ashamed* to confess, I fell asleep before this picture, and sitting with my back towards the Venus de Medicis. Buonaparte, in answer to one who had spoken of his being in a sleep up to the moment when one of his great battles was to be fought, as a proof of the calmness of his mind, and command over anxious thoughts, said frankly, "that he slept because, from bodily exhaustion, he could not help it." In like manner it is noticed that criminals, on the night previous to their execution, seldom awake before they are called, a proof that the body is the master of us far more than we need be willing to allow.'

Florence. '*Rapt above earth,*' *and the following one.*[2] 'However, at first, these two Sonnets from M. Angelo may seem in their spirit somewhat inconsistent with each other, I have not scrupled to place them side by side as characteristic of their great author, and others with whom he lived. I feel, nevertheless, a wish to know at what periods of his life they were respectively composed. The latter, as it expresses, was written in his advanced years, when it was natural that the platonism that pervades the one should give way to the Christian feeling that inspired the other. Between both there is more than poetic affinity.'

Among the ruins of a Convent in the Apennines.[3]—'The political revolutions of our time have multiplied on the Continent objects that unavoidably call forth reflections such as are expressed in these verses, but the ruins in those countries are too recent to exhibit in anything like

[1] Vol. iii. p. 176. The picture by Raffaelle in the Tribune at Florence.

[2] Vol. iii. p. 177, 178.

[3] Vol. iii. p. 178.

an equal degree the beauty with which time and nature have invested the remains of our convents and abbeys. These verses, it will be observed, take up the beauty long before it is matured, as one cannot but wish it may be among some of the desolations of Italy, France, and Germany.'

Sonnets after leaving Italy.[1] — 'I had proof in several instances that the Carbonari, if I may still call them so, and their favourers, are opening their eyes to the necessity of patience, and are intent upon spreading knowledge actively, but quietly as they can. May they have resolution to continue in this course, for it is the only one by which they can truly benefit their country.

'We left Italy by the way which is called the "Nuova Strada d'Allemagna," to the east of the high passes of the Alps, which take you at once from Italy into Switzerland. The road leads across several smaller heights, and winds down different vales in succession, so that it was only by the accidental sound of a few German words I was aware we had quitted Italy; and hence the unwelcome shock alluded to in the two or three last lines of the sonnet with which this imperfect series concludes.'

Such were Mr. Wordsworth's own reminiscences of his 'Tour in Italy.'

I have been honoured by his accomplished companion with the following brief recollections of the same excursion. They were not written for any other eye than that of the author of these Memoirs; but having read them, he did not hesitate to request permission to insert them in this volume, a favour which Mr. Robinson kindly granted.

[1] Vol. iii. p. 180.

'30 *Russell Square, Oct.* 18, 1850.

'My dear Sir,

'I feel quite ashamed, I assure you, of sending you the Itinerary of my journey with Mr. Wordsworth, so poorly accompanied as it must be, and the more, because Mr. Wordsworth seems to have thought that I might be able to make a contribution to your work worth your acceptance. At the same time, I am much relieved by recollecting that he himself cared nothing for the connection which a place might have with a great poet, unless an acquaintance with it served to illustrate his works. He made this remark in the Church of St. Onofrio at Rome, where Tasso lies buried. The place which, on this account, interested him more than any other on the journey was *Vaucluse*, while he cared nothing for Arezzo, which claims to be the place of Petrarch's birth. Indeed, a priest on the spot, on another visit, said, it is not certain that he was born there, much less in the house marked with his name. Mr. W. was not without the *esprit de corps*, even before his official dignity, and took great interest in Savona, on account of Chiabrera, as appears in the "Musings near Aquapendente," perhaps the most beautiful of these Memorials of the Italian tour — "alas too few!" As he himself repeatedly said of the journey, "It is too late." "I have matter for volumes," he said once, "had I but youth to work it up." It is remarkable how in this admirable poem meditation predominates over observation. It often happened that objects of universal attraction served chiefly to bring back to his mind absent objects dear to him. When we were on that noble spot, the Amphitheatre at Nismes, I observed his eyes fixed in a direction where there was the least to be seen; and, looking that way, I beheld two very young children at

play with flowers; and I overheard him say to himself, "Oh! you darlings, I wish I could put you in my pocket and carry you to Rydal Mount."

'It was Mr. Theed, the sculptor, who informed us of the pine tree being the gift of Sir George Beaumont. This incident occurred within a few minutes after our walking up the Pincian Hill. And this was the very first observation Mr. W. made at Rome.

'It was a remark justly made on the Memorials of the Swiss Journey, in 1820, that Mr. W. left unnoticed the great objects which have given rise to innumerable common-place verses, and huge piles of bad prose, and which every body talks about, while he dwelt on impressions peculiar to himself. As a reproach, nothing can be more idle and unmeaning. I expected it would be so with these latter poems, and so I found it. There are not more than two others which bring anything to my mind.

'The most important of these is the "Cuckoo at Laverna." I recollect perfectly well that I heard the cuckoo at Laverna twice before he heard it; and that it absolutely fretted him that my ear was first favoured; and that he exclaimed with delight, "I hear it! I hear it!" It was at Laverna, too, that he led me to expect that he had found a subject on which he would write; and that was the love which birds bore to St. Francis. He repeated to me a short time afterwards a few lines, which I do not recollect among those he has written on St. Francis in this poem. On the journey, one night only I heard him in bed composing verses, and on the following day I offered to be his amanuensis; but I was not patient enough, I fear, and he did not employ me a second time. He made inquiries for St. Francis's biography, as if he would dub him his Leibheiliger (body-saint), as Göethe (saying that every one must have one) declared St. Philip Neri to be his.

'The painter monk at Camaldoli also interested him, but he heard my account only in addition to a *very poor* exhibition of professional talent; but he would not allow the pictures to be so very poor, as every nun ought to be beautiful when she takes the veil.

'I recollect, too, the pleasure he expressed when I said to him, "You are now sitting in Dante's chair." It faces the south transept of the cathedral at Florence.

'I have been often asked whether Mr. W. wrote anything on the journey, and my answer has always been, "Little or nothing." Seeds were cast into the earth, and they took root slowly. This reminds me that I once was privy to the conception of a sonnet, with a distinctness which did not once occur on the longer Italian journey. This was when I accompanied him into the Isle of Man. We had been drinking tea with Mr. and Mrs. Cookson, and left them when the weather was dull. Very soon after leaving them we passed the church tower of Bala Sala. The upper part of the tower had a sort of frieze of yellow lichens. Mr. W. pointed it out to me, and said, "It 's a perpetual sunshine." I thought no more of it, till I read the beautiful sonnet,

"Broken in fortune, but in mind entire;" [1]

and then I exclaimed, I was present at the conception of this sonnet, at least of the combination of thought out of which it arose.

'I beg to subscribe myself, with sincere esteem,

'Faithfully yours,

'H. C. Robinson.'*

[1] See above, p. 248.

* [To this Friend the Memorials of the Tour were inscribed.

'To Henry Crabb Robinson.

Companion! by whose buoyant spirit cheered,

In whose experience trusting, day by day
Treasures I gained with zeal that neither feared
The toils nor felt the crosses of the way,
These records take, and happy should I be
Were but the Gift a meet return to thee
For kindnesses that never ceased to flow,
And prompt self-sacrifice to which I owe
Far more than any heart but mine can know.

W. Wordsworth.

Rydal Mount, Feb. 14, 1842.' Vol. III. p. 152. — H. R.]

CHAPTER LIII.

OTHER POEMS IN THE SAME VOLUME.

THE first in order, among the miscellaneous poems in the volume containing the Italian Memorials, is that entitled *Guilt and Sorrow; or, Incidents on Salisbury Plain;*[1] which was commenced in the year 1793, soon after the author's return from France.

This poem is followed by a sonnet, and by a small piece entitled the *Forsaken*,[2] and lines beginning

'Lyre! though such power do in thy magic live.'[3]

Concerning these the Poet said:[4]

Guilt and Sorrow. — 'Unwilling to be unnecessarily particular, I have assigned this poem to the dates 1793 and 1794; but, in fact, much of the Female Vagrant's story was composed at least two years before. All that relates to her sufferings as a soldier's wife in America, and her condition of mind during her voyage home, were faithfully taken from the report made to me of her own case by a friend who had been subjected to the same trials, and affected in the same way. Mr. Coleridge, when I first became acquainted with him, was so much impressed with this poem, that it would have encouraged me to publish the whole as it then stood; but the Mariner's fate appeared

[1] Vol. i. p. 40. See above, Vol. I. p. 81. [2] Vol. i. p. 218.
[3] Vol. ii. p. 110. [4] MSS. I. F.

to me so tragical, as to require a treatment more subdued, and yet more strictly applicable in expression, than I had at first given to it. This fault was corrected near fifty years afterwards, when I determined to publish the whole. It may be worth while to remark, that though the incidents in this attempt do only in a small degree produce each other, and it deviates accordingly from the general rule by which narrative pieces ought to be governed, it is not therefore wanting in continuous hold upon the mind, or in unity, which is effected by the identity of moral interest that places the two personages upon the same footing in the reader's sympathies. My ramble over many parts of Salisbury Plain put me, as mentioned in the preface, upon writing this poem, and left upon my mind imaginative impressions the force of which I have felt to this day. From that district I proceeded to Bath, Bristol, and so on to the banks of the Wye; when I took again to travelling on foot. In remembrance of that part of my journey, which was in 1793, I began the verses,

"Five years have passed," &c.'

The Forsaken. — 'This was an overflow from the affliction of Margaret, and excluded as superfluous there; but preserved in the faint hope that it may turn to account, by restoring a shy lover to some forsaken damsel; my poetry having been complained of as deficient in interests of this sort, a charge which the next piece, beginning,

"Lyre! though such power do in thy magic live!"

will scarcely tend to obviate. The natural imagery of these verses was supplied by frequent, I might say intense, observation of the Rydal Torrent. What an animating contrast is the ever-changing aspect of that, and indeed of every one of our mountain brooks, to the monotonous tone

and unmitigated fury of such streams among the Alps as are fed all the summer long by glaciers and melting snows! A traveller, observing the exquisite purity of the great rivers, such as the Rhone at Geneva, and the Rheuss at Lucerne, when they issue out of their respective lakes, might fancy for a moment that some power in nature produced this beautiful change, with a view to make amends for those Alpine sullyings which the waters exhibit near their fountain-heads; but, alas! how soon does that purity depart before the influx of tributary waters that have flowed through cultivated plains and the crowded abodes of men.'

'Next comes *An Address to the Scholars of the Village School of* ——, written at Goslar[1] in 1798, which appear to have been suggested by recollections of his own master at Hawkshead, the Rev. Wm. Taylor.

The occasion of the five following poems, viz. *On the expected Invasion*, 1803; at the *Grave of Burns*, 1803; *On the Banks of the Nith;** *Elegiac Verses in Memory of my Brother, John Wordsworth*, 1805, has been before detailed.

The two next refer to Sir G. Beaumont. The following notices from the lips of their author may be added to what has been said elsewhere with respect to them, and those notices will be succeeded by others from the same source.[2]

At Applethwaite.[3] — 'This was presented to me by

[1] Vol. v. p. 124. See above, Vol. I. p. 138. [2] MSS. I. F.
[3] Vol. ii. p. 262. See above, Vol. I. p. 259.

* [The stanzas beginning, 'Too frail to keep the lofty vow,' Vol. iii. p. 5. See in the next chapter (LIV.) in the letter of Dec. 23, 1839, an account of the addition, after many years, of what is now the last stanza. — H. R.]

Sir George Beaumont with a view to the erection of a house upon it, for the sake of being near to Coleridge, then living, and likely to remain, at Greta Hall, near Keswick. This little property, with a considerable addition that still leaves it very small, lies beautifully upon the banks of a rill that gurgles down the side of Skiddaw; and the orchard and other parts of the grounds command a magnificent prospect of Derwent Water, the Mountains of Borrowdale and Newlands. Not many years ago I gave the place to my daughter.

A Night Thought.[1] — 'These verses were thrown off extempore upon leaving Mrs. Luff's house one evening at Fox Ghyll.'

Farewell Lines.[2] — 'These lines were designed as a farewell to Charles Lamb and his sister, who had retired from the throngs of London to comparative solitude in the village of Enfield, Herts.'

Love Lies Bleeding.[3] — 'It has been said that the English, though their country has produced so many great poets, is now the most unpoetical nation in Europe. It is probably true, for they have more temptation to become so than any other European people. Trade, commerce, and manufactures, physical science and mechanic arts, out of which so much wealth has arisen, have made our countrymen infinitely less sensible to movements of imagination and fancy than were our forefathers in their simple state of society. How touching and beautiful were in most instances the names they gave to our indigenous flowers, or any other they were familiarly acquainted with! Every month for many years have we been importing plants and flowers from all quarters of the globe, many of which are spread through our gardens, and some, perhaps,

[1] Vol. iv. p. 204. [2] Vol. i. p. 291. [3] Vol. ii. p. 58.

likely to be met with on the few commons which we have left. Will their botanical names ever be displaced by plain English appellations which will bring them home to our hearts by connection with our joys and sorrows? It can never be, unless society treads back her steps towards those simplicities which have been banished by the undue influence of towns spreading and spreading in every direction, so that city life with every generation takes more and more the lead of rural. Among the ancients, villages were reckoned the seats of barbarism. Refinement, for the most part false, increases the desire to accumulate wealth; and while theories of political economy are boastfully pleading for the practice, inhumanity pervades all our dealings in buying and selling. This selfishness wars against disinterested imagination in all directions, and, evils coming round in a circle, barbarism spreads in every quarter of our island. Oh, for the reign of justice! and then the humblest man among us would have more peace and dignity in and about him than the highest have now.'

Address to the Clouds.[1] — 'These verses were suggested while I was walking on the foot-road between Rydal Mount and Grasmere. The clouds were driving over the top of Nab-Scar across the vale; they set my thoughts agoing, and the rest followed almost immediately.'

Suggested by a Picture of the Bird of Paradise.[2] — 'I will here only, by way of comment, direct attention to the fact, that pictures of animals and other productions of Nature, as seen in conservatories, menageries, museums, &c., would do little for the national mind, nay, they would be rather injurious to it, if the imagination were excluded

[1] Vol. ii. p. 206. [2] Vol. ii. p. 209.

by the presence of the object, more or less out of the state of nature. If it were not that we learn to talk and think of the lion and the eagle, the palm-tree, and even the cedar from the impassioned introduction of them so frequently in Holy Scripture, and by great poets, and divines who write as poets, the spiritual part of our nature, and, therefore, the higher part of it, would derive no benefit from such intercourse with such subjects.'

Composed by the Sea-shore.[1] — 'These lines were suggested during my residence under my son's roof at Moresby, on the coast near Whitehaven, at the time when I was composing those verses among the "Evening Voluntaries" that have reference to the sea. It was in that neighbourhood I first became acquainted with the ocean and its appearances and movements. My infancy and early childhood were passed at Cockermouth, about eight miles from the coast; and I well remember that mysterious awe with which I used to listen to anything said about storms and shipwrecks.'

The Norman Boy.[2] — 'The subject of this poem was sent me by Mrs. Ogle, to whom I was personally unknown, with a hope on her part that I might be induced to relate the incident in verse. And I do not regret that I took the trouble; for not improbably the fact is illustrative of the boy's early piety, and may concur, with my other little pieces on children, to produce profitable reflection among my youthful readers. This is said, however, with an absolute conviction that children will derive most benefit from books which are not unworthy the perusal of persons of any age. I protest with my whole heart against those productions, so abundant in the present day, in which the doings of children are dwelt upon as if they were inca-

[1] Vol. iv. p. 135. [2] Vol. i. p. 176.

pable of being interested in anything else. On this subject I have dwelt at length in the Poem on the growth of my own mind.[1]'

Poor Robin.[2] — 'I often ask myself, what will become of Rydal Mount, after our day? Will the old walls and steps remain in front of the house and about the grounds, or will they be swept away, with all the beautiful mosses and ferns, and wild geraniums and other flowers, which their rude construction suffered and encouraged to grow among them? This little wild-flower, "*Poor Robin*," is here constantly courting my attention, and exciting what may be called a domestic interest, with the varying aspects of its stalks, and leaves, and flowers. Strangely do the tastes of men differ, according to their employment and habits of life. "What a nice well would that be," said a labouring man to me one day, "if all that rubbish was cleared off!" The *rubbish* was some of the most beautiful mosses, and lichens, and ferns, and other wild growths, that could possibly be seen. Defend us from the tyranny of trimness and neatness, showing itself in this way! Chatterton says of freedom,

"Upon her head wild weeds were spread;"

and depend upon it if "the marvellous boy" had undertaken to give Flora a garland, he would have preferred what we are apt to call weeds, to garden flowers. True taste has an eye for both. Weeds have been called flowers out of place. I fear the place most people would assign to them, is too limited. Let them come near to our abodes, as surely they may, without impropriety or disorder.'

[1] Prelude, p. 115–129. [2] Vol. v. p. 16.

The Cuckoo-Clock.[1] — 'Of this clock I have nothing further to say than what the poem expresses, except that it must be here recorded that it was a present from the dear friend for whose sake these notes were chiefly undertaken, and who has written them from my dictation.'

The Widow on Windermere Side.[2] — 'The facts recorded in this poem, were given me, and the character of the person described, by my highly esteemed friend, the Rev. R. P. Graves, who has long officiated as curate at Bowness, to the great benefit of the parish and neighbourhood. The individual was well known to him: she died before these verses were composed. It is scarcely worth while to notice that the stanzas are written in the sonnet form, which was adopted when I thought the matter might be included in twenty-eight lines.'

Epitaph in Langdale Churchyard.[3] — 'Owen Lloyd, the subject of this epitaph, was born at Old Brathay, near Ambleside, and was the son of Charles Lloyd and his wife Sophia (*née* Pemberton), both of Birmingham, who came to reside in this country soon after their marriage. Owen was educated under Mr. Dawes, of Ambleside, Dr. Butler, of Shrewsbury, and lastly at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he would have been greatly distinguished as a scholar, but for inherited infirmities of bodily constitution, which, from early childhood, affected his mind. His love for the neighbourhood in which he was born, and his sympathy with the habits and character of the mountain yeomanry, in conjunction with irregular spirits, that unfitted him for facing duties in situations to which he was unaccustomed, induced him to accept the retired curacy of Langdale. How much he was beloved

[1] Vol. ii. p. 204. [2] Vol. i. p. 281. [3] Vol. v. p. 123.

and honoured there, and with what feelings he discharged his duty under the oppression of severe malady, is set forth, though imperfectly, in this epitaph.'*

Sonnet. '*A Poet,*' *&c.*[1] — 'I was impelled to write this sonnet by the disgusting frequency with which the word *artistical*, imported with other impertinencies from the Germans, is employed by writers of the present day. For "artistical," let them substitute "artificial," and the poetry written on this system, both at home and abroad, will be, for the most part, much better characterized.'

Sonnet. '*The most alluring Clouds.*'[2] — Hundreds of times have I seen hanging about and above the Vale of Rydal, clouds that might have given birth to this sonnet, which was thrown off, on the impulse of the moment, one evening when I was returning home from the favourite walk of ours, along the Rotha, under Loughrigg.'

Feel for the wrongs.[3] — 'This sonnet is recommended to the perusal of the corn-law leaguers, the political economists, and of all those who consider that the evils under which we groan, are to be removed or palliated by measures ungoverned by moral or religious principles.'

On a Portrait of the Duke of Wellington, by Haydon.[4] — 'This was composed while I was ascending Helvellyn, in company with my daughter and her husband. She was

[1] Vol. ii. p. 310. [2] Vol. ii. p. 310. [3] Vol. iv. p. 264.
[4] Vol. ii. p. 311.

* [See among the posthumous poems of Hartley Coleridge, 'A Schoolfellow's Tribute to the memory of the Rev. Owen Lloyd,' and 'Epitaph on Owen Lloyd.' 'Poems of Hartley Coleridge,' Vol. II. p. 187, and p. 204. — H. R.]

on horseback, and rode to the top of the hill without dismounting.'[1]

To a Painter.[2] — 'The picture[3] which gave occasion to this and the following sonnet, was from the pencil of Miss M. Gillies, who resided for several weeks under our roof at Rydal Mount.'

To a Redbreast.[4] — 'Almost the only verses composed by our lamented sister, S. H.'

Floating Island.[5] — 'By my sister, who takes a pleasure in repeating these verses, which she composed not long before the beginning of her illness.'

If with old love of you, dear hills.[6] — 'This and the following sonnet were composed on what we call the *far terrace*, at Rydal Mount, where I have murmured out many thousands of verses.'

[1] Mr. Haydon made a very spirited sketch of Mr. Wordsworth climbing Helvellyn, and composing these lines; and this portrait has been very successfully engraved by Mr. Lupton.*

[2] Vol. ii. p. 312, 313.

[3] A portrait of Mrs. Wordsworth.

[4] Vol. v. p. 19. [5] Vol. v. p. 22. [6] Vol. iii. p. 181.

* [There is also a likeness of Wordsworth painted many years earlier by Haydon, in his large historical picture of 'Christ's Entry into Jerusalem,' — introduced there by that species of anachronism, for which the artist had the authority of the practice of some of the great Masters. The likeness may be recognised in the group of three figures, whose faces are made expressive of different feelings, with which some of the spectators were looking at the Holy One in His bodily presence — the evil spirit of contemptuous unbelief and hate visible in the countenance of Voltaire — the placid and passionless face of Newton, symbolical of the workings of a willing and inquiring intellect — and a reverential adoration shown in the bowed head and veiled eyes of Wordsworth.

This picture is in Philadelphia. — H. R.]

At Dover. '*From the Pier-head.*'[1]—'For the impressions on which this sonnet turns, I am indebted to the experience of my daughter, during her residence at Dover, with our dear friend Miss F——.'

Oh, what a wreck.[2]—'The sad condition of poor Mrs. Southey put me upon writing this. It has afforded comfort to many persons whose friends have been similarly affected.'

Intent on gathering wool.[3]—'Suggested by a conversation with Miss F., who, along with her sister, had, during their childhood, found much delight in such gatherings for the purpose here alluded to.'

The volume closes with 'The Borderers, a Tragedy,' the history of which has been already communicated to the reader.[4]

[1] Vol. iii. p. 148. [2] Vol. ii. p. 314. [3] Vol. ii. p. 315.
[4] Above, Vol. I. p. 96.

CHAPTER LIV.

PERSONAL NARRATIVE.

Mr. Wordsworth returned from his tour in Italy in August, 1837.

While in London, he addressed the following letter to Professor Henry Reed, of Philadelphia, who had published an edition of Wordsworth's Poetical Works in America.

This was the commencement of a correspondence which was carried on without interruption, and with mutual gratification, to the year 1846. The friendship of the correspondents continued unbroken to the time of Mr. Wordsworth's death.

To Professor Henry Reed, of Philadelphia.

'*London, August* 19, [1837.]

'My dear Sir,

'Upon returning from a tour of several months upon the Continent, I find two letters from you awaiting my arrival, along with the edition of my Poems you have done me the honour of editing. To begin with the former letter, April 25, 1836: It gives me concern that you should have thought it necessary (not to *apologize*, for that you have not done, but) to explain at length why you addressed me in the language of affectionate regard. It must surely be gratifying to one, whose aim as an author has been the hearts of his fellow-creatures of all ranks and

in all stations, to find that he has succeeded in any quarter; and still more must he be gratified to learn that he has pleased in a distant country men of simple habits and cultivated taste, who are at the same time widely acquainted with literature. Your second letter, accompanying the edition of the Poems, I have read, but unluckily have it not before me. It was lent to Serjeant Talfourd, on account of the passage in it that alludes to the possible and desirable establishment of English copyright in America. I shall now hasten to notice the edition which you have superintended of my Poems. This I can do with much pleasure, as the book, which has been shown to several persons of taste, Mr. Rogers, in particular, is allowed to be far the handsomest specimen of printing in double columns which they have seen. Allow me to thank you for the pains you have bestowed upon the work. Do not apprehend that any difference in our several arrangements of the poems can be of much importance; you appear to understand me far too well for that to be possible. I have only to regret, in respect to this volume, that it should have been published before my last edition, in the correction of which I took great pains, as my last labour in that way, and which moreover contains several additional pieces. It may be allowed me also to express a hope that such a law will be passed ere long by the American legislature, as will place English authors in general upon a better footing in America than at present they have obtained, and that the protection of copyright between the two countries will be reciprocal. The vast circulation of English works in America offers a temptation for hasty and incorrect printing; and that same vast circulation would, without adding to the price of each copy of an English work in a degree that could be grudged or thought injurious by any purchaser, allow an American remunera-

tion, which might add considerably to the comforts of English authors, who may be in narrow circumstances, yet who at the same time may have written solely from honourable motives. Besides, Justice is the foundation on which both law and practice ought to rest.

'Having many letters to write on returning to England after so long an absence, I regret that I must be so brief on the present occasion. I cannot conclude, however, without assuring you that the acknowledgments which I receive from the vast continent of America are among the most grateful that reach me. What a vast field is there open to the English mind, acting through our noble language! Let us hope that our authors of true genius will not be unconscious of that thought, or inattentive to the duty which it imposes upon them, of doing their utmost to instruct, to purify, and to elevate their readers. That such may be my own endeavour through the short time I shall have to remain in this world, is a prayer in which I am sure you and your life's partner will join me. Believe me gratefully,

'Your much obliged friend,

'W. WORDSWORTH.'

In September of the same year, Mr. Wordsworth was with his friends and relatives at Brinsop Court, Herefordshire, whence he wrote the following letter to Mr. Quillinan, who had just arrived from Oporto; in which he pays a just and honourable tribute to his poetical and critical powers.

To Edward Quillinan, Esq.

'*Brinsop Court, Sept.* 20, 1837.

'My dear Mr. Quillinan,

'We are heartily glad to learn from your letter, just re-

ceived, that, in all probability, by this time, you must have left the unhappy country in which you have been so long residing. I should not have been sorry if you had entered a little more into Peninsular politics; for what is going on there is shocking to humanity, and one would be glad to see anything like an opening for the termination of these unnatural troubles. The position of the Miguelites, relatively to the conflicting, so called, liberal parties, is just what I apprehended, and expressed very lately to Mr. Robinson. . . . . .

He came down with us to Hereford, with a view to a short tour on the banks of the Wye, which has been prevented by an unexpected attack of my old complaint of inflammation in the eye; and in consequence of this, Dora will accompany me home, with a promise on her part of returning to London before the month of October is out. Our places are taken in to-morrow's coach for Liverpool; so that, since we must be disappointed of seeing you and Jemima here, we trust that you will come on to Rydal from Leeds. This very day Dora had read to me your poem again: it convinces me, along with your other writings, that it is in your power to attain a permanent place among the poets of England. Your thoughts, feelings, knowledge, and judgment in style, and skill in metre, entitle you to it; and, if you have not yet succeeded in gaining it, the cause appears to me merely to lie in the subjects which you have chosen. It is worthy of note, how much of Gray's popularity is owing to the happiness with which his subject is selected in three places, his "Hymn to Adversity," his "Ode on the distant prospect of Eton College," and his "Elegy." I ought, however, in justice to you, to add, that one cause of your failure appears to have been thinking too humbly of yourself, so that you have not reckoned it worth while to look suffi-

ciently round you for the best subjects, or to employ as much time in reflecting, condensing, bringing out and placing your thoughts and feelings in the best point of view as is necessary. I will conclude this matter of poetry and my part of the letter, with requesting that, as an act of friendship, at your convenience, you would take the trouble — a considerable one, I own — of comparing the corrections in my last edition with the text in the preceding one. You know my principles of style better, I think, than any one else; and I should be glad to learn if anything strikes you as being altered for the worse. You will find the principal changes are in "The White Doe," in which I had too little of the benefit of your help and judgment. There are several also in the Sonnets, both miscellaneous and political: in the other poems they are nothing like so numerous; but here also I should be glad if you would take the like trouble. Jemima, I am sure, will be pleased to assist you in the comparison, by reading, new or old, as you may think fit. With love to her, I remain,

'My dear Mr. Quillinan,

'Faithfully yours,

'WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.'

During this visit in Herefordshire he was disabled by an attack of inflammation in one of his eyes.

'After having had excellent health during my long ramble,' he says, in a letter to Lord Lonsdale, written after his return, 'it is unfortunate that I should thus be disabled at the conclusion. The mischief came to me in Herefordshire, whither I had gone on my way home to see my brother-in-law, who, by his horse falling with him some time ago, was left without the use of his limbs.

'I was lately a few days with Mr. Rogers, at Broadstairs, and also with the Archbishop of Canterbury, at Addington Park; they were both well, and I was happy to see the Archbishop much stronger than his slender and almost feeble appearance would lead one to expect. We walked up and down in the park for three hours one day, and nearly four the next, without his seeming to be the least fatigued. I mention this as we must all feel the value of his life in this state of public affairs.

'The cholera prevented us getting as far as Naples, which was the only disappointment we met with. As a man of letters I have to regret that this most interesting tour was not made by me earlier in life, as I might have turned the notices it has supplied me with to more account than I now expect to do. With respectful remembrances to Lady Lonsdale and to your Lordship, in which Mrs. W. unites,

'I remain, my dear Lord, faithfully,

'Your much obliged servant,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.

'Rydal Mount, Sept. 27.'

The following is to the learned editor of Bentley's works, and of the writings of Akenside, and various English poets.

To the Rev. Alex. Dyce.

'Dec. 23, 1837.

'My dear Sir,

'I have just received your valuable present of Bentley's works, for which accept my cordial thanks, as also for the leaf to be added to Akenside.

'Is it recorded in your Memoir of Akenside,— for I

have not leisure nor eyesight at present to look,—that he was fond of sitting in St. James's Park with his eyes upon Westminster Abbey? This, I am sure, I have either read or heard of him; and I imagine that it was from Mr. Rogers. I am not unfrequently a visitor on Hampstead Heath, and seldom pass by the entrance of Mr. Dyson's villa on Goulder's Hill, close by, without thinking of the pleasure which Akenside often had there.

'I cannot call to mind a reason why you should not think some passages in "The Power of Sound" equal to anything I have produced. When first printed in the "Yarrow Revisited," I placed it at the end of the volume, and, in the last edition of my Poems, at the close of the Poems of Imagination, indicating thereby my *own* opinion of it.

'How much do I regret that I have neither learning nor eyesight thoroughly to enjoy Bentley's masterly "Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris!" Many years ago I read the work with infinite pleasure. As far as I know, or rather am able to judge, it is without a rival in that department of literature; a work of which the English nation may be proud as long as acute intellect, and vigorous powers, and profound scholarship shall be esteemed in the world.

'Let me again repeat my regret that in passing to and from Scotland you have never found it convenient to visit this part of the country. I should be delighted to see you, and I am sure Mr. Southey would be the same: and in his house you would find an inexhaustible collection of books, many curious no doubt; but his classical library is much the least valuable part of it. The death of his excellent wife was a deliverance for herself and the whole family, so great had been her sufferings of mind and body.

'You do not say a word about Skelton; and I regret much your disappointment in respect of Middleton.

'I remain, my dear Sir,

'Faithfully, your much obliged,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

To Henry Reed, Esq., Philadelphia.

'*Rydal Mount, Dec.* 23, 1839.

'My dear Sir,

'The year is upon the point of expiring; and a letter of yours, dated May 7th, though not received till late in June (for I was moving about all last spring and part of the summer), remains unacknowledged. I have also to thank you for the acceptable present of the two volumes which reached me some time afterwards.*

. . . . . .

'Your letters are naturally turned upon the impression which my poems have made, and the estimation they are held, or likely to be held, in, through the vast country to which you belong. I wish I could feel as livelily as you do upon this subject, or even upon the general destiny of those works. Pray do not be long surprised at this declaration. There is a difference of more than the length of your life, I believe, between our ages. I am standing on the brink of that vast ocean I must sail so soon; I must speedily lose sight of the shore; and I could not once have conceived how little I now am troubled by the thought of how long or short a time they who remain on that shore may have sight of me. The other day I

* [A copy of the edition of the 'Lyrical Ballads,' printed in Philadelphia in the year 1802. — H. R.]

chanced to be looking over a MS. poem,* belonging to the year 1803, though not actually composed till many years afterwards. It was suggested by visiting the neighbourhood of Dumfries, in which Burns had resided, and where he died; it concluded thus:

"Sweet Mercy to the gates of heaven
This minstrel lead, his sins forgiven;
The rueful conflict, the heart riven
With vain endeavour,
And memory of earth's bitter leaven
Effaced for ever."

'Here the verses closed; but I instantly added, the other day,

"But why to him confine the prayer,
When kindred thoughts and yearnings bear
On the frail heart the purest share
With all that live?
The best of what we do and are,
Just God, forgive!"

'The more I reflect upon this last exclamation, the more I feel (and perhaps it may in some degree be the same with you) justified in attaching comparatively small importance to any literary monument that I may be enabled to leave behind. It is well, however, I am convinced, that men think otherwise in the earlier part of their lives; and why it is so, is a point I need not touch upon in writing to you.

'Before I dismiss this subject let me thank you for the extract from your intelligent friend's letter; and allow me to tell you that I could not but smile at your Boston critic

* ['Thoughts on the Banks of Nith,' near the residence of Burns: Vol. iii. p. 5. See also last chapter (LIV.) — H. R.]

placing my name by the side of Cowley. I suppose he cannot mean anything more than that the same measure of reputation or fame (if that be not too presumptuous a word) is due to us both.

'German transcendentalism, which you say this critic is infected by, would be a woful visitation for the world.

. . . . .

'The way in which you speak of me in connection with your possible visit to England was most gratifying; and I here repeat that I should be truly glad to see you in the delightful spot where I have long dwelt; and I have the more pleasure in saying this to you, because, in spite of my old infirmity, my strength exceeds that of most men of my years, and my general health continues to be, as it always has been, remarkably good. A page of blank paper stares me in the face; and I am not sure that it is worth while to fill it with a sonnet which broke from me not long ago in reading an account of misdoings in many parts of your Republic. Mrs. Wordsworth will, however, transcribe it.

"Men of the Western World! in Fate's dark book,
Whence these opprobrious leaves, of dire portent?" [1]

'To turn to another subject. You will be sorry to learn that several of my most valued friends are likely to suffer from the monetary derangements in America. My family, however, is no way directly entangled, unless the Mississippi bonds prove invalid. There is an opinion pretty current among discerning persons in England, that Republics are not to be trusted in money concerns, — I suppose because the sense of honour is more obtuse, the responsibility being divided among so many. For my

[1] See Vol. iv. p. 261.

own part, I have as little or less faith in absolute despotisms, except that they are more easily convinced that it is politic to keep up their credit by holding to their engagements.* What power is maintained by this practice was shown by Great Britain in her struggle with Buonaparte. This lesson has not been lost on the leading monarchical states of Europe. But too much of this.

'Believe me to remain,

'Faithfully yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

* [Touching upon this subject in a letter of later date, Mr. Wordsworth said that he chiefly grieved on account of the very many, who in humble life were stripped of their comforts, and even brought to want by these defalcations; and even still more did he mourn for the disgrace brought upon and the discouragement given to, the self-government of nations by the spread of the suffrage among the people. Letter to H. R. 'Rydal Mount, Ambleside, Oct. 10, 1843.' — H. R.]

CHAPTER LV.

PERSONAL HISTORY.

In the summer of 1839, Mr. Wordsworth was honoured by the University of Oxford with the degree of D. C. L.

One of the most gratifying circumstances of that inauguration was that he was presented for his degree by a person, whose claims on the gratitude of posterity are in many respects similar to his own. In introducing the Poet of the Lakes to the authorities of the University, for the reception of his degree, the Professor of Poetry, the Rev. John Keble used the following language, rendered more appropriate by its connection with the subject of the Creweian Oration of that year, which was designed to commemorate the care bestowed on the 'Pauperes Christi' by the Founders and Benefactors of the University. 'Possim etiam illud docere, Academiam, ipsasque adeo literas non bene carere posse suavitate illâ austerâ et solidâ, quâ solet alumnos suos imbuere sapienter et bene acta pauperum juventus. Verum huic loco satis superque me fecisse arbitrabar, Academici, si semel vobis eum in memoriam revocarem : cum præsertim is præsto sit nobis in nobili hâc coronâ, qui unus omnium maximè poetarum, mores, studia, religiones pauperum collocaverit non dicam bono verum etiam cœlesti lumine. Ad ejus itaque viri carmina remittendos esse hoc tempore putabam, si qui ex intimo animo sentire vellent arcanam illam necessitudinem

honestæ Paupertatis cum Musis severioribus, cum excelsa Philosophia, immo cum sacrosanctâ Religione.'

This eulogy from the author of 'The Christian Year' may be aptly coupled with another from the same quarter. I refer to the Dedication of Mr. Keble's Prælections on Poetry, delivered before the University of Oxford, and inscribed to Mr. Wordsworth, in the following terms:

'Viro Vere Philosopho
Et Vati Sacro
Gulielmo Wordsworth
Cui Illud Munus Tribuit
Deus Opt. Max.
Ut, Sive Hominum Affectus Caneret,
Sive Terrarum Et Cœli Pulchritudinem,
Legentium Animos Semper Ad Sanctiora Erigeret,
Semper A Pauperum Et Simpliciorum Partibus Staret,
Atque Adeo, Labente Sæculo, Existeret
Non Solum Dulcissimæ Poeseos,
Verum Etiam Divinæ Veritatis
Antistes,
Unus Multorum, Qui Devinctos Se Esse Sentiunt
Assiduo Nobilium Ejus Carminum Beneficio,
Hoc Qualecunque Grati Animi Testimonium
D. D. D.
Reverentiæ, Pietatis, Amicitiæ Ergo.'

This inscription was particularly grateful to Mr. Wordsworth. He regarded the expression 'ad sanctiora erigeret,' as a very happy delineation of what he, as a Poet, had endeavoured to perform.

He did not profess to be a writer of 'Sacred Poetry,' properly so called. Indeed, he had some doubts how far uninspired men are competent to write sacred poetry. But, however this may be, he considered it to be the mission of all poets, and he regarded it as his own vocation, to endeavour to elevate the mind to sacred things.

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College, of which he was a fellow, having been tenderly nursed by his father, during rather a long illness. He was a most amiable man, and, I have reason to believe, was one of the best scholars in Europe. We were all strongly attached to him, and, as his poor father writes, "the loss is to him, and to his sorrowing sons, irreparable on this side of the grave."

. . . . . .

'W. W.'

To the Rev. the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge.

'*Friday, Jan.* 3, [1840.]

'My very dear Brother,

'It is in times of trouble and affliction that one feels most deeply the strength of the ties of family and nature. We all most affectionately condole with you, and those who are around you, at this melancholy time. The departed was beloved in this house, as he deserved to be; but our sorrow, great as it is for our own sakes, is still heavier for yours and his brothers'. He is a power gone out of our family, and they will be perpetually reminded of it. But the best of all consolations will be with you, with them, with us, and all his numerous relatives and friends, especially with Mrs. Hoare, that his life had been as blameless as man's could well be, and, through the goodness of God, he is gone to his reward.[1]

. . . . . .

'I remain your loving brother,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

[1] A bust, executed by Mr. Weekes, under Sir Francis Chantrey's superintendence, was placed by his friends in the Antechapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was buried. It

This letter may be fitly followed by another, addressed about the same time to Dr. Parry, of Summer Hill, Bath, on a similar occasion, — the bereavement of a daughter.[1]

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is a very excellent likeness. Beneath it is the following inscription:

H . S . E

IOANNES . WORDSWORTH . A . M . COLL . S . S . TRIN . SOC
CHRISTOPHORI . WORDSWORTH . S . T . P . COLL . MAG . FIL . NAT . MAX
GVLIELMI . WORDSWORTH . MAGNI . POETAE . NEPOS
CVM . BENTLEIO . ILLO . PORSONO . DOBREO
VT . VITAE . ET . SEPVLTVRAE . LOCO
ITA . STVDIORVM . SIMILITVDINE . CONIVNCTVS
ERVDITIONEM . SIBI . MAGNO . LABORE
COMPARAVIT . ADCVRATISSVMAM
QVAM . EGREGIE . COMMENDABANT
FORMA . VVLTVS . INCESSVS . SERMO
OMNES . COMPOSITI
INDOLIS . SVAVITAS . CHRISTIANA . HVMILITAS
AD . SENTIENDOS . TENERI . ANIMI . ADFECTVS . PROPENSVS
IN . MONSTRANDIS . VERECVNDISSVMVS
ALIORVM . AEQVVS . AESTVMATOR . SEVERVS . SVI
DIGNVS . LAVDARI . NON . CVPIDVS
LATERE . QVVM . VELLET . COEPIT . LATENDO . CONSPICI
HAVE . FILI . FRATER . AMICE . DVLCISSVME
IN . IPSO . AETATIS . FLORE . NOBIS . ERREPTE
NOS . PATER . FRATRES . SODALES
TE . PIO . DESIDERIO . PROSEQVENTES
SEMPER . REMINISCIMVR . TVI
NON . SINE . LACRVMIS

NATVS . KAL . IVL . CIↃIↃCCCV . OB . PRID . KAL . IAN . CIↃIↃCCCXL
EFFIGIEM . E . MARMORE . AMICI . MOERENTES . P . C .

[1] Ellen Parry, who died April 28, 1840. Mr. Wordsworth saw her April 28, 1839. He was again at Summer Hill, Bath, in April, 1840.

'*Rydal Mount, Ambleside, May* 21, 1840.

'My dear Sir,

'Pray impute to anything but a want of due sympathy with you in your affliction, my not having earlier given an answer to your letter. In truth, I was so much moved by it, that I had not, at first, sufficient resolution to bring my thoughts so very close to your trouble, as must have been done, had I taken up the pen immediately. I have been myself distressed in the same way, though my two children were taken from me at an earlier age, one in her fifth, the other in his seventh year, and within half a year of each other. I can, therefore, enter into your sorrows more feelingly than for others, is possible, who have not suffered like losses.

'Your departed daughter struck me as having one of the most intelligent and impressive countenances I ever looked upon, and I spoke of her as such to Mrs. Wordsworth, Miss Fenwick, and to others. The indications which I saw in her, of a somewhat alarming state of health, I could not but mention to you, when you accompanied me a little way from your own door. You spoke something encouraging; but they continued to haunt me; so that your kind letter was something less of a shock than it would otherwise have been, though not less of a sorrow.

'How pathetic is your account of the piety with which the dear creature supported herself under those severe trials of mind and body with which it pleased God to prepare her for a happier world! The consolation which *children* and very young persons, who have been religiously brought up, draw from the Holy Scriptures, ought to be habitually on the minds of *adults* of all ages, for the benefit of their own souls, and requires to be treated in a loftier and more comprehensive train of thought and

feeling than by writers has been usually bestowed upon it. It does not, therefore, surprise me that you hinted at my own pen being employed upon the subject, as brought before the mind in your lamented daughter's own most touching case. I wish I were equal to anything so holy, but I feel that I am not. It is remarkable, however, that within the last few days the subject has been presented to my mind by two several persons, both unknown to me; which is something of a proof how widely its importance is felt, and also that there is a feeling that I am not wholly unworthy of treating it.

'Your letter, my dear Sir, I value exceedingly, and shall take the liberty, as I have done more than once, with fit reverence, of reading it in quarters where it is likely to do good, or rather, where I know it must do good.

'Wishing and praying that the Almighty may bestow upon yourself, the partner in your bereavement, and all the fellow-sufferers in your household, that consolation and support which can proceed only from His grace,

'I remain, my dear Dr. Parry,

'Most faithfully, your much obliged,

'W. WORDSWORTH.'

CHAPTER LVI.

PERSONAL HISTORY, 1840, 1841.

To the Rev. Henry Alford.

(*Postmark*) '*Ambleside, Feb.* 21, 1840.

'My dear Sir,

'Pray excuse my having been some little time in your debt. I could plead many things in extenuation, the chief, that old one of the state of my eyes, which never leaves me at liberty either to read or write a tenth part as much as I could wish, and as otherwise I ought to do.

'It cannot but be highly gratifying to me to learn that my writings are prized so highly by a poet and critic of your powers. The essay upon them which you have so kindly sent me, seems well qualified to promote your views in writing it. I was particularly pleased with your distinction between religion in poetry, and versified religion. For my own part, I have been averse to frequent mention of the mysteries of Christian faith; not from a want of a due sense of their momentous nature, but the contrary. I felt it far too deeply to venture on handling the subject as familiarly as many scruple not to do. I am far from blaming them, but let them not blame me, nor turn from my companionship on that account. Besides general reasons for diffidence in treating subjects of holy writ, I have some especial ones. I might err in points of faith, and I should not deem my mistakes less to be

deprecated because they were expressed in metre. Even Milton, in my humble judgment, has erred, and grievously; and what poet could hope to atone for his apprehensions[1] in the way in which that mighty mind has done?

'I am not at all desirous that any one should write an elaborate critique on my poetry.[2] There is no call for it. If they be from above, they will do their own work in course of time; if not, they will perish as they ought. But scarcely a week passes in which I do not receive grateful acknowledgments of the good they have done to the minds of the several writers. They speak of the relief they have received from them under affliction and in grief, and of the calmness and elevation of spirit which the poems either give or assist them in attaining. As these benefits are not without a traceable bearing upon the good of the immortal soul, the sooner, perhaps, they are pointed out and illustrated in a work like yours, the better.

'Pray excuse my talking so much about myself: your letter and critique called me to the subject. But I assure you it would have been more grateful to me to acknowledge the debt we owe you in this house, where we have read your poems with no common pleasure. Your "Abbot of Muchelnage" also makes me curious to hear more of him.

'But I must conclude, ...
I was truly sorry to have missed you when you and Mrs. Alford called at Rydal. Mrs. W. unites with me in kind regards to you both; and believe me,

'My dear Sir,

'Faithfully yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

[1] Sic.: qu. 'Misapprehensions.' — *H. A.*

[2] Sic.: l. 'Poems.' — *H. A.*

This letter may be followed by a memorandum of a conversation with Mr. Wordsworth, communicated by the Rev. R. P. Graves.

'I must try to give you a summary of a long conversation I had with Wordsworth, on the subject of *sacred poetry*, and which I wish I were able to report in full. In the course of it he expressed to me the feelings of reverence which prevented him from venturing to lay his hand on what he always thought a subject too high for him; and he accompanied this with the earnest protest that his works, as well as those of any other poet, should not be considered as developing all the influences which his own heart recognised, but rather those which he considered himself able as an artist to display to advantage, and which he thought most applicable to the wants, and admitted by the usages, of the world at large. This was followed by a most interesting discussion upon Milton, Cowper, the general progress of religion as an element of poetry, and the gradual steps by which it must advance to a power comprehensive and universally admitted; steps which are defined in their order by the constitution of the human mind, and which must proceed with vastly more slowness in the case of the progress made by collective minds, than it does in an individual soul.'

To Lady Frederick Bentinck.

'*July*, 1840.

'I hope, dear Lady Frederick, that nothing will prevent my appearance at Lowther towards the end of next week. But I have for these last few years been visited always with a serious inflammation in my eyes about this season of the year, which causes me to have fears about the

fulfilment of any engagement, however agreeable. Pray thank Lord Lonsdale, on my part, for his thinking of me upon this occasion.

'On Monday morning, a little before nine, a beautiful and bright day, the Queen Dowager and her sister appeared at Rydal. I met them at the lower waterfall, with which her Majesty seemed much pleased. Upon hearing that it was not more than half a mile to the higher fall, she said, briskly, she would go; though Lord Denbigh and Lord Howe felt that they were pressed for time, having to go upon Keswick Lake, and thence to Paterdale. I walked by the Queen's side up to the higher waterfall, and she seemed to be struck much with the beauty of the scenery. Her step was exceedingly light; but I learned that her health is not good, or rather that she still suffers from the state of her constitution, which caused her to go abroad.

'Upon quitting the park of Rydal, nearly opposite our own gate, the Queen was saluted with a pretty rural spectacle; nearly fifty children, drawn up in avenue, with bright garlands in their hands, three large flags flying, and a band of music. They had come from Ambleside, and the garlands were such as are annually prepared at this season for a ceremony called "the Rush-bearing;" and the parish-clerk of Ambleside hit upon this way of showing at Rydal the same respect to the Queen which had been previously shown at Ambleside. I led the Queen to the principal points of view in our little domain, particularly to that, through the summer-house, which shows the lake of Rydal to such advantage. The Queen talked more than once about having a cottage among the lakes, which of course was nothing more than a natural way of giving vent to the pleasure which she had in the country. You will think, I fear, that I have dwelt already

too long upon the subject; and shall therefore only add, that all went off satisfactorily, and that every one was delighted with her Majesty's demeanour. Lord and Lady Sheffield were the only persons of her suite whom I had seen before. Lord Howe was pleased with the sight of the pictures from his friend Sir George Beaumont's pencil, and showed them to the Queen, who, having sat some little time in the house, took her leave, cordially shaking Mrs. Wordsworth by the hand, as a friend of her own rank might have done. She had also inquired for Dora, who was introduced to her. I hope she will come again into the country, and visit Lowther.

'Pray excuse the above long story, which I should not have ventured upon, but that you expressed a wish upon the subject.

'What enchanting weather! I hope, and do not doubt, that you all enjoy it, my dear Lady Frederick, as we are doing.

'I ought not to forget, that two days ago I went over to see Mr. Southey, or rather Mrs. Southey, for he is past taking pleasure in the presence of any of his friends. He did not recognise me till he was told. Then his eyes flashed for a moment with their former brightness, but he sank into the state in which I had found him, patting with both hands his books affectionately, like a child. Having attempted in vain to interest him by a few observations, I took my leave, after five minutes or so. It was, for me, a mournful visit, and for his poor wife also. His health is good, and he may live many years; though the body is much enfeebled.

'Ever affectionately yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.

'We hope your lameness will soon leave you, that you may ramble about as usual.'

To the Rev. T. Boyles Murray.

'*Rydal Mount, Ambleside, Sept.* 24, 1840.

'Dear Sir,

'Upon returning home after an absence of ten days, I have the pleasure of finding your obliging letter, and the number of the "Ecclesiastical Gazette" containing the "Ecclesiastical Duties and Revenues Act:" for both marks of attention I beg you to accept my sincere thanks. As soon as I can find leisure, I will carefully peruse the Act; at present I can only say that I look upon changes so extensive and searching with a degree of alarm proportionate to my love and affection for the Establishment with which they are connected.

'As you have put me in possession of the "Gazette," I can scarcely feel justified in looking to the fulfilment of your promise to send me the Act, separately printed. Indeed, I feel that it would be giving yourself more trouble than there is occasion for.

'It pleases me much to learn that Mrs. Murray and you enjoyed your ramble among the lakes.

'Believe me to be, dear Sir,

'Faithfully,

'Your obliged servant,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

To Lady Frederick Bentinck.

'*Rydal Mount, Sept.* 26, 1840.

'Dear Lady Frederick,

'Mr. Rogers and I had a pleasant journey to Rydal the

day we left all our kind friends at Lowther. We alighted at Lyulph's Tower, and saw the waterfall in great power after the night's rain, the sun shining full into the chasm, and making a splendid rainbow of the spray. Afterwards, walking through Mr. Askew's grounds, we saw the lake to the greatest possible advantage. Mr. R. left on Thursday, the morning most beautiful, though it rained afterwards. I know not how he could tear himself away from this lovely country at this charming season. I say charming, notwithstanding this is a dull day; but yesterday was most glorious. I hope our excellent friend does not mean to remain in London.

. . . . . .

'We have had no visits from strangers since my return, so that the press of the season seems to be over. The leaves are not changed here so much as at Lowther, and of course not yet so beautiful, nor are they ever quite so as with you, your trees being so much finer, and your woods so very much more extensive. We have a great deal of coppice, which makes but a poor show in autumn compared with timber trees.

'Your son George knows what he has to expect in the few sheets which I enclose for him.

'With many thanks for the endless kind attentions which I received from you, and others under your father's hospitable roof, and with my grateful respects to him, and a thousand good wishes for all, I remain, my wife and daughter joining in these feelings,

'My dear Lady Frederick,

'Affectionately yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

The following describes an alarming accident which happened to Mr. Wordsworth on November 11th, 1840.

'Rydal Mount, Monday Evening.

'The accident after which you inquire, dear Lady Frederick, with so much feeling, might have been fatal, but through God's mercy we escaped without bodily injury, as far as I know, worth naming. These were the particulars: About three miles beyond Keswick, on the Ambleside Road, is a small bridge, from the top of which we got sight of the mail coach coming towards us, at above forty yards distance, just before the road begins to descend a narrow, steep, and winding slope. Nothing was left for J——, who drove the gig in which we were, but to cross the bridge, and, as the road narrowed up the slope that was in our front, to draw up as close to the wall on our left (our side of the road) as possible. This he did, both of us hoping that the coachman would slacken his pace down the hill, and pass us as far from our wheel as the road would allow. But he did neither. On the contrary, he drove furiously down the hill; and though, as we afterwards ascertained, by the track of his wheels, he had a yard width of road to spare, he made no use of it. In consequence of this recklessness and his want of skill, the wheel of his coach struck our wheel most violently, drove back our horse and gig some yards, and then sent us altogether through a small gap in the wall, with the stones of the wall tumbling about us, into a plantation that lay a yard perpendicular below the level of the road from which the horse and gig, with us in it, had been driven. The shafts were broken off close to the carriage, and we were partly thrown and partly leaped out. After breaking the traces, the horse leaped back into the road and galloped off, the shafts and traces sticking to him; nor did the poor creature stop till he reached the turnpike at Grasmere, seven miles from the spot where the mischief

was done. We sent by the coach for a chaise to take us to Rydal, and hired a cart to take the broken gig to be mended at Keswick.

'The mercy was, that the violent shock from the coach did not tear off our wheel; for if this had been done, J——, and probably I also, must have fallen under the hind wheels of the coach, and in all likelihood been killed. We have since learned that the coachmen had only just come upon the road, which is in a great many places very dangerous, and that he was wholly unpractised in driving four-in-hand. Pray excuse this long and minute account. I should have written to you next day, but I waited, hoping to be able to add that my indisposition was gone, as I now trust it is.

. . . . . .

'With respectful remembrances to Lord Lonsdale, and kindest regards to yourself and Miss Thompson, I remain,

'Dear Lady Frederick,

'Affectionately yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

One of the first inquiries made concerning the Poet, after this accident, was from her late Majesty Queen Adelaide, through Lord Howe.

To Henry Reed, Esq., Philadelphia.

'*Rydal Mount, Jan.* 13, 1841.

'My dear Mr. Reed,

. . . . . .

'It is gratifying to learn that through your means Mr. Allston has been reminded of me. We became acquainted many years ago through our common friend Mr. Cole-

ridge, who had seen much of Mr. Allston when they were both living at Rome.*

. . . . . .

'You mention the Sonnet I wrote upon Haydon's picture of the Duke of Wellington. I have known Haydon, and Wilkie also, from their contemporaneous introduction to the world as artists; their powers were perceived and acknowledged by my lamented friend Sir George Beaumont, and patronized by him accordingly; and it was at his house where I first became acquainted with them both. Haydon is bent upon coming to Rydal next summer, with a view to paint a likeness of me, not as a mere matter-of-fact portrait, but one of a poetical character, in which he will endeavour to place his friend in some favourite scene of these mountains. I am rather afraid, I own, of any attempt of this kind, notwithstanding my high opinion of his ability; but if he keeps in his present mind, which I doubt, it will be in vain to oppose his inclination. He is

* [What follows in continuation of this passage respecting the late Mr. Allston, has an interest for the American reader especially:

'Mr. Allston, had he remained in London, would have soon made his way to public approbation; his genius and style of painting were too much above the standard of taste, at that time prevalent, to be duly acknowledged at once, by the many; but so convinced am I that he would have succeeded in obtaining general admiration, that I have ever regretted his speedy return to his native country, not so much that we have lost him (for that feeling would be more than counterbalanced by what America has gained) as because, while living in Europe, he would have continued to be more in the way of the works of the great Masters, which could not but have been beneficial to his own powers. Let me add, that he sometimes favours me with an opportunity of hearing from and of him through his American friends whom he does me the honour of introducing to me.'—H. R.]

a great enthusiast, possessed also of a most active intellect, but he wants that submissive and steady good sense which is absolutely necessary for the adequate development of power in that art to which he is attached.

'As I am on the subject of painting, it may be worth while to add, that Pickersgill came down last summer to paint a portrait of me for Sir Robert Peel's gallery at Drayton Manor. It was generally thought here that this work was more successful than the one he painted some years ago for St. John's College, at the request of the Master and Fellows.

'There has recently been published in London a volume of some of Chaucer's tales and poems modernized. This little specimen originated in what I attempted with the "Prioress's Tale;" and if the book should find its way to America, you will see in it two further specimens from myself. I had no further connection with the publication than by making a present of these to one of the contributors. Let me, however, recommend to your notice the "Prologue," and the "Franklin's Tale;" they are both by Mr. Horne, a gentleman unknown to me, but are, the latter in particular, very well done. Mr. Leigh Hunt has not failed in the "Manciple's Tale," which I myself modernized many years ago; but, though I much admire the genius of Chaucer as displayed in this performance, I could not place my version at the disposal of the editor, as I deemed the subject somewhat too indelicate, for pure taste, to be offered to the world at this time of day. Mr. Horne has much hurt this publication by not abstaining from the "Reve's Tale;" this, after making all allowance for the rude manners of Chaucer's age, is intolerable, and by indispensably softening down the incidents, he has killed the spirit of that humour, gross and farcical, that pervades the original. When the work was

first mentioned to me, I protested as strongly as possible against admitting any coarseness or indelicacy; so that my conscience is clear of countenancing aught of that kind. So great is my admiration of Chaucer's genius, and so profound my reverence for him as an instrument in the hands of Providence for spreading the light of literature through his native land, that, notwithstanding the defects and faults in this publication, I am glad of it, as a mean for making many acquainted with the original who would otherwise be ignorant of everything about him but his name.*

'I shall always, dear Sir, be happy to hear from you; and believe me to be ever faithfully and gratefully,

'Yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

* [The volume here alluded to, entitled 'The Poems of GEOFFREY CHAUCER, modernized. London, 1841,' has on its title-page the following motto:

'That noble Chaucer, in those former times,
Who first enriched our English with his rhymes,
And was the first of ours that ever broke
Into the Muse's treasures, and first spoke
In mighty numbers; delving in the mine
Of perfect knowledge. — WORDSWORTH.'

Not recognising the quotation, I was led to inquire of Mr. Wordsworth respecting it, and received from him the following explanation, 'The motto you inquire after in the modernized Chaucer, is by Drayton: it was in the MS. which I sent without noticing from what author it was taken.' Letter to H. R., March 1, 1842. — The error is mentioned here, not only to guard against misapprehension as to the authorship of the motto, but also as a curious illustration of the resemblance which may exist in the diction of two great Poets, using English words at an interval of two hundred years. The general similarity of style is such, that the mistake of the accomplished editor of the 'Chaucer Modernized' is not surprising under the circumstances. — H. R.]

To John Peace, Esq.

'*Rydal Mount, Jan.* 19, 1841.

'My dear Mr. Peace,

'It is an age since I heard from you, or of you. Probably I am a letter, or more than one in your debt; but for many reasons I am a bad correspondent, as you know, and will, I doubt not, excuse. I have no especial reason for writing at this moment of time, but I have long wished to thank *you* for the "*Apology for Cathedrals*," which I have learned is from your pen. The little work does you great credit; it is full of that wisdom which the heart and imagination alone could adequately supply for such a subject; and is, moreover, very pleasingly diversified by styles of treatment all good in their kind. I need add no more than that I entirely concur in the views you take: but what avails it? the mischief is done, and they who have been most prominent in setting it on foot will have to repent of their narrow comprehension; which, however, is no satisfaction to us, who from the first foresaw the evil tendency of the measure.

'Though I can make but little use of my eyes in writing or reading, I have lately been reading Cowper's "Task" aloud; and in so doing was tempted to look over the parallelisms, for which Mr. Southey was in his edition indebted to you. Knowing how comprehensive your acquaintance with poetry is, I was rather surprised that you did not notice the identity of the thought, and accompanying illustrations of it, in a passage of Shenstone's Ode upon Rural Elegance, compared with one in "The Task,"[1] where Cowper speaks of the inextinguishable love of the country

[1] Book iv. 'It is a flame,' &c., compared with Shenstone's Ode to the Duchess of Somerset, 'Her impulse nothing may restrain.'

as manifested by the inhabitants of cities in their culture of plants and flowers, where the want of air, cleanliness, and light, is so unfavourable to their growth and beauty. The germ of the main thought is to be found in Horace:

> "Nempe inter varias nutritur sylva columnas,
> Laudaturque domus longos quæ prospicit agros;
> Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret."
> Lib. i. epist. 10, v. 22.

'Pray write to me soon.

. . . . . .

'Ever, my dear friend,

'Faithfully, your obliged,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

'12, *North Parade, Bath, April* 19, 1841.

'My dear Mr. Peace,

'Here I am and have been since last Wednesday evening. I came down the Wye, and passed through Bristol, but arriving there at the moment the railway train was about to set off, and being in the company of four ladies (Miss Fenwick, and Mrs. Wordsworth, and my daughter and niece), I had not a moment to spare, so could not call on you, my good friend, which I truly regretted. Pray spare an hour or two to come here, and then we can fix a day, when, along with my daughter, I can visit Bristol, see you, Mr. Cottle, and Mr. Wade.

. . . . . .

'All unite in kindest regards.

'Ever yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

'*Bath, May* 11, 1841.

'My dear Mr. Peace,

'This morning my dear daughter was married in St. James's in this place.

. . . . . .

'To-morrow we leave Bath for Wells, and thence to the old haunts of Mr. Coleridge, and myself, and dear sister, about Alfoxden.

'Adieu,

'W. W.'

Edward Quillinan, Esq., to whom Dora Wordsworth was married, is eldest son of John Quillinan, Esq., merchant of Oporto. He was born at Oporto, on the 12th August, 1791. He was at school for a short time at Sedgley Park, in Staffordshire; then, for some years, at Bornheim House, Carshalton, at that time a Dominican College. He went to Oporto, to his father, in 1807. The English residents were driven from Portugal two or three months afterwards by the approach of the French. Mr. Quillinan entered the army as cornet by purchase, in the 2d Dragoon Guards (Queen's Bays), in 1808. In 1809 he was with the Walcheren expedition, and witnessed the bombardment of Flushing, from the Scheldt, for the cavalry were not disembarked. He purchased a lieutenancy in the 23d Light Dragoons on their return from Talavera, and subsequently exchanged into the 3d Dragoon Guards; and joined that regiment, near St. Sebastian, in Spain, in 1813, and was with it throughout the campaign of 1814, which ended with the war the same year at Toulouse. He received a medal of honour for that day. In 1817, Mr. Quillinan married Jemima A. D. Brydges, second daughter of Sir Egerton Brydges, Bart., of Denton Court, near Dover, by his first wife. He afterwards joined his regiment in Ireland, and was with it for some time in Scotland. In 1820–21 he was quartered at Penrith, and then first became personally acquainted with Mr. Wordsworth, of whose works he had been a constant admirer, through evil and

good report, during his life in the army. This year, 1821, he quitted the service, and settled in the vale of Rydal, in a house taken for him by Mr. Wordsworth, for the sake of whose society, even more than for the beauty of the district, he became a resident at the lakes. He made an excursion in this year with Mr. Wordsworth to Fountain's Abbey, Bolton Priory, York, &c., returning by the Yorkshire Caves and Craven country. Mrs. Quillinan died in 1822, at the cottage, Rydal (now Mr. Ball's, but much enlarged by him), six months after the birth of her second child, both daughters. Her monument in Grasmere church was designed by Sir F. Chantrey, and executed at his house in Eccleston street, under the superintendence of Allan Cunningham. The first six lines of the inscribed verse were written by Mr. Wordsworth.*

Mr. Quillinan's two daughters by this marriage had been connected from infancy with Mr. Wordsworth as a poet, when Dora Wordsworth became to them as a mother. His beautiful lines to a Portrait[1] were suggested by a picture of the elder; and the younger was an object of special interest to him as his godchild.[2]

> 'Rotha! my spiritual child, this head was grey
> When at the sacred font for thee I stood.'

Mr. Quillinan, at the request of his brother-in-law, Colonel Brydges Barrett, of the Grenadier Guards, then left Westmoreland to reside at Lee Priory, the seat of that gentleman, near Canterbury, whose family were abroad, and who was for the most part in London or elsewhere, with his regiment. Here Mr. Q. received more than one visit from Mr. Wordsworth, and the several

[1] Vol. iv. p. 249. See above, Vol. I. p. 27. [2] Vol. ii. p. 305.

* [See the inscription at the end of this chapter. — H. R.]

members of his family. Soon after the return of Sir E. B.'s family from the continent, to reside at Lee, Mr. Quillinan went to Portugal to visit his father, and on his return took a house in town, where he was occasionally visited by Mr. Wordsworth and his family, by whom he also often was received at Rydal. Mr. Quillinan was married 1841, to Dora, Mr. Wordsworth's only daughter, at Bath, where her father and mother and brothers were with her, on a visit to a very dear friend. After a short tour in Somersetshire, partly with her father and mother and Miss F., Mr. and Mrs. Q. went to pass some weeks at Rydal Mount. Afterwards they removed to Canterbury for a few months, and then to London. In the winter of 1843–44 they returned to live near Rydal. In April 1845, it was recommended that a more genial climate should be sought in the south for the benefit of Mrs. Quillinan's health, which had long been very delicate. Mrs. Quillinan has described their residence at Oporto, and visit to Lisbon, and to the places of chief interest on the southern coast, including also Seville and the Alhambra, in her published Journal on 'Portugal, Spain,' &c.* They

* [The full title of this work is 'Journal of a few Months' Residence in Portugal, and Glimpses of the South of Spain; in two Volumes. London, 1847.' It has this simple dedication, 'These Notes are dedicated in all reverence and love to my Father and Mother, for whom they were written.'

The following passage is in the Preface. '* * The shores of Minho and of the Douro, as well as of the Tagus, so long called "the home-station" of our navy, are now easy of access as the Banks of the Rhine; and almost the whole length of the inland country, from Braganza to Faro, has to most of our travellers who have been everywhere else, the grand recommendation of being *new*. It is to this "great fact," the possibility of finding novelty even yet in the Old World, and in a quarter within three days' voyage from the Isle of Wight, that I would call their atten-

came home *viâ* Marseilles and Paris in the summer of 1846, having, as they fondly believed (alas! that hope was of very brief duration) fully succeeded in the object for which they went, Mrs. Quillinan's restoration to health,

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tion, and not theirs only, but that also of ramblers from the New World, the countrymen of Prescott and Washington Irving, of whom every year brings so many to the Mediterranean side of Spain, yet so few to this, the Atlantic shore of Spain and western-most coast of Europe — a shore which ought particularly to interest all Americans — for hither swam Columbus from his burning ship, here he found a home and a wife, and here he meditated and prepared his plan of discovery long before Isabella's patronage enabled him to realize it. Here, too, Martin Bœhm found patronage; here Magellan and Alvares Cabral were born; and here, in the service of King Emanuel, died Americus, the man from whom half the globe so strangely received a name.' Preface, p. xii.

The following passage is added for the sake of the deeper interest given to it by the death of the author:

* * 'If it were for no higher motive than to give myself an opportunity to express private feelings of respect and gratitude to an English Chaplain abroad, for public services faithfully and diligently performed in trying times, through a series of years, I could not leave Oporto without naming our own dear Church, where for so long a time we heretics have been permitted to offer up our prayers and join in the simple rites of our Church, undisturbed by the jibes or threats of those who bear rule in the land. There is nothing attractive in the appearance of the building, as may be inferred from the conditions under which permission was obtained for its erection, viz., that it should not look like a church either within or without, and must not aspire to tower, belfry, or bell — none of which it possesses — but the situation partly makes up for these deficiencies; and Nature, with her never-failing bounty, has in the chapel-yard supplied "pillars" of lime-trees, whose branches "have learned to frame a darksome aisle;" and soothing it is to repose for a while under the cool green shade of these aisles, before entering the little chapel where you are too often oppressed by heat and glare.' Vol. I. p. 241. — H. R.]

They then returned to the neighbourhood of Rydal. To the inexpressible grief of her husband, father, mother, brothers, and friends, Dora Quillinan died in 1847, little more than a year after her return to her native vale.

Mr. Quillinan is the author of 'The Conspirators,' a series of Tales on the Philadelphian Plots in Napoleon's Armies; and also of various Reviews, chiefly on foreign literature; and of many poems, most of which are in manuscript, and among them a translation in 8va rima, of the first half (or five cantos) of the Lusiad of Camoens. He is at present engaged on a Translation of the History of Portugal, by Sr. Herculano, Librarian to the King. This work, of which only three or four volumes are yet published, is so elaborately and ably written by the Portuguese author as to lessen regret for the non-accomplishment of Mr. Southey's long-meditated work on the same subject.

[The monumental inscription referred to above is as follows — the first six lines of the verse being by Wordsworth:

'In the burial-ground of the church are deposited the remains of Jemima Ann Deborah, second daughter of Sir Egerton Brydges, of Denton Court, Kent, Bart. She departed this life, at the Ivy Cottage, Rydal, May 25, 1822, aged 28 years. This memorial is erected by her husband, Edward Quillinan.

> These vales were saddened with no common gloom,
> When good Jemima perished in her bloom;
> When such the awful will of Heaven, she died
> By flames breathed on her from her own fireside.
> On earth we dimly see, and but in part
> We know, yet faith sustains the sorrowing heart.
> And she, the pure, the patient, and the meek,
> Might have fit epitaph, could feelings speak:
> If words could tell and monuments record,
> How treasures lost are inwardly deplored,

No name by grief's fond eloquence adorned,
More than Jemima's would be praised and mourned;
The tender virtues of her blameless life,
Bright in the daughter, brighter in the wife;
And in the cheerful mother brightest shone —
That light hath passed away — the will of God be done.'

'Notes of a Tour, &c. 1827,' in Hone's 'Table-Book,' Vol. III. p. 280. — H. R.]

CHAPTER LVII.

PERSONAL HISTORY, 1841–1843.

To the Rev. Dr. Wordsworth, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge.

'My dear Brother,

'Your affectionate and generous kindness to your, I trust, deserving niece, has quite overpowered me and her mother, to whom I could not forbear communicating the contents of your letter.'

The above relates to an act of kindness which the late Master of Trinity had the happiness of performing, on the occasion of Dora Wordsworth's marriage.

The following refers to a serious accident which occurred to him at Cambridge, by a fall from his horse.

'*Feb.* 16, 1841.

'My dear Brother,

'The good accounts which we receive from time to time of your progress towards perfect recovery from your late severe accident, embolden me to congratulate you in my own name, and the whole of my family.

. . . . . .

'It remains now for us to join heartily, as we all do, in expressing a wish that, being convalescent, you would not be tempted to over-exert yourself. I need scarcely add,

that we all unite with you and your sons, with Susan, and your other relations, and all your friends, in fervent thanks to Almighty God for His goodness in preserving you.

'As a brother I feel deeply; and regarding your life as most valuable to the community, I the more rejoice in the prospect of your life being prolonged.

'Believe me, my dear Brother,

'Most affectionately yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

To Professor Reed.

'*Rydal Mount, Ambleside, Aug.* 16, 1841.

'My dear Mr. Reed,

'I have lately had the pleasure of seeing, both in London and at my own house, the Bishop of New Jersey. He is a man of no ordinary powers of mind and attainments, of warm feelings and sincere piety. Indeed, I never saw a person of your country, which is remarkable for cordiality, whose manner was so thoroughly cordial. He had been greatly delighted with his reception in England, and what he had seen of it both in art and nature. By the by, I heard him preach an excellent sermon in London. I believe this privilege is of modern date. The Bishop has furnished me with his funeral sermon upon Bishop White, to assist me in fulfilling a request which you first made to me, viz., that I would add a Sonnet to my Ecclesiastical Series, upon the union of the two Episcopal churches of England and America.[1] I will endeavour to do so, when I have more leisure than at

[1] Dr. Seabury was consecrated bishop (of Connecticut) by Scottish bishops at Aberdeen, on the 14th November, 1784. Dr. White and Dr. Provoost were consecrated bishops (of Pennsylvania and of New York), at Lambeth, 4th February, 1787.

present, this being the season when our beautiful region attracts many strangers, who take up much of my time.

'Do you know —— of ——? She has just sent me, with the highest eulogy, certain essays of ——. Our —— and he appear to be what the French used to call *esprits forts*, though the French idols showed their spirit after a somewhat different fashion. Our two present Philosophes, who have taken a language which they suppose to be English for their vehicle, are verily "par nobile fratrum," and it is a pity that the weakness of our age has not left them exclusively to this appropriate reward — mutual admiration. Where is the thing which now passes for philosophy at Boston to stop?

'Ever faithfully yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

To John Peace, Esq.

Rydal Mount, Sept. 4, 1841.

'My dear Peace,

. . . . . .

'Mrs. W. is quite well. We were three months and as many weeks absent before we reached our own home again. We made a very agreeable tour in Devonshire, going by Exeter to Plymouth, and returning along the coast by Salisbury and Winchester to London. In London and its neighbourhood we stayed not quite a month. During this tour we visited my old haunts, at and about Alfoxden and Netherstowey, and at Coleorton, where we stayed several days. These were farewell visits for life, and of course not a little interesting.

. . . . . .

'Ever faithfully yours,

'W. WORDSWORTH.'

The following is to one of his nephews, a son of the Master of Trinity, who had resigned the headship of that College in the summer.

'*Rydal, Nov.* 5, 1841.

'My dear C——,

'Your father left us yesterday, having been just a week under our roof. The weather was favourable, and he seemed to enjoy himself much. His muscular strength, as proved by the walks we took together, is great. One day we were nearly four hours on foot, without resting, and he did not appear in the least fatigued.

. . . . . .

'We all thought him looking well, and his mind appears as active as ever. It was a great delight to us to see him here.

'He was anxious to see Charles; he will reach Winchester this afternoon, I hope without injury.

'Yours, &c.,

'W. W.'

To John Peace, Esq.

'*Rydal Mount, Feb.* 23, 1842.

'My dear Sir,

'I was truly pleased with the receipt of the letter which you were put upon writing by the perusal of my *Penal Sonnets*[1] in the "Quarterly Review." Being much en-

[1] Sonnets on the Punishment of Death, Vol. iv. pp. 265–272, which were reviewed in the Quarterly, in an article ascribed to the pen of a person distinguished as a poet and an essayist.*

* [This article has been republished (in part) by its author, in 'Notes from Books by Henry Taylor, author of Philip Van Artevelde.' — H. R.]

gaged at present, I might have deferred making my acknowledgments for this and other favours (particularly your "Descant") if I had not had a special occasion for addressing you at this moment. A Bristol lady has kindly undertaken to be the bearer of the walking-stick which I spoke to you of some time since. It was cut from a holly-tree planted in our garden by my own hand.

. . . . . .

'Your *Descant* amused me, but I must protest against your system, which would discard punctuation to the extent you propose. It would, I think, destroy the harmony of blank verse when skilfully written. What would become of the pauses at the third syllable followed by an *and*, or any such word, without the rest which a comma, when consistent with the sense, calls upon the reader to make, and which being made, he starts with the weak syllable that follows, as from the beginning of a verse? I am sure Milton would have supported me in this opinion. Thomson wrote his blank verse before his ear was formed as it was when he wrote the "Castle of Indolence," and some of his short rhyme poems. It was, therefore, rather hard in you to select him as an instance of punctuation abused.

'I am glad that you concur in my view on the *Punishment of Death*. An outcry, as I expected, has been raised against me by weak-minded humanitarians. What do you think of one person having opened a battery of nineteen fourteen-pounders upon me, *i. e.* nineteen sonnets, in which he gives himself credit for having blown me and my system to atoms? Another sonneteer has had a solitary shot at me from Ireland.

'Ever faithfully yours,

'W. WORDSWORTH.'

In the summer of 1842, Mr. Wordsworth resigned his

office of Stamp Distributor; not, however, on a retiring pension, as has been sometimes asserted. In a letter, dated March 2, 1840, and addressed to Lord Morpeth, he says, 'I never did seek or accept a pension from the present or any other administration, directly or indirectly.' But the duties, and also the emoluments, of the Distributorship were transferred to his son William, who had, for some time, acted as his deputy at Carlisle.

The office vacated by Mr. Wordsworth was worth rather more than 500*l.* a year, but since that time its value has been greatly reduced in consequence of various public alterations in the official arrangments.

In connection with this subject, Mr. Wordsworth received the following letter from the Prime Minister:

'*Whitehall, Aug.* 7, 1842.

'My dear Sir,

'Allow me to assure you that I had the greatest personal satisfaction in promoting the arrangement to which you refer.

'It is some compensation for the severe toil and anxiety of public life to have, occasionally, the opportunity of serving or gratifying those who are an honour to their country.

'My son speaks with the greatest delight of the means he has had of recommending himself to your kind notice.

'With cordial wishes that every blessing may attend your remaining years,

'Believe me, my dear Sir,

'Most faithfully yours,

'ROBERT PEEL.'

This was soon afterwards followed by another communication from the same quarter.

'*Whitehall, Oct.* 15, 1842.

'My dear Sir,

'I trust you will permit me to exercise in your favour a privilege which office confers, and which will, so exercised, give to its possessor unalloyed satisfaction.

'It is my duty to recommend to Her Majesty the appropriation of a limited fund which Parliament has placed at the disposal of the Crown, on the condition, that it shall be applied to the reward and encouragement of public service, or of eminent literary or scientific merit.

'The total amount which I have free from absolute engagement does not exceed six hundred pounds per annum, and I feel convinced that I cannot apply a moiety of that sum in a manner more in accordance with the spirit and intentions with which the grant to the Crown has been made, than by placing (with your sanction) your honoured name on the Civil List, for an annual provision of three hundred pounds, to endure during your life.

'I need scarcely add, that the acceptance, by you, of this mark of favour from the Crown, considering the grounds on which it is proposed, will impose no restraint upon your perfect independence, and involve no obligation of a personal nature.

'Believe me, my dear Sir, with true esteem,

'Most faithfully yours,

'ROBERT PEEL.'

To Professor Reed.

'*Rydal Mount, Ambleside, Sept.* 4, 1842.

'My dear Mr. Reed,

. . . . . .

'A few days ago, after a very long interval, I returned to poetical composition; and my first employment was to

write a couple of sonnets upon subjects recommended by you to take place in the Ecclesiastical Series. They are upon the Marriage Ceremony, and the Funeral Service. I have also, at the same time, added two others, one upon Visiting the Sick, and the other upon the Thanksgiving of Women after Childbirth, both subjects taken from the Services of our Liturgy. To the second part of the same series, I have also added two, in order to do more justice to the Papal Church for the services which she did actually render to Christianity and humanity in the Middle Ages. By the by, the sonnet beginning, "Men of the Western World," &c., was slightly altered after I sent it to you not, in the hope of substituting a better verse, but merely to avoid the repetition of the same word, "book," which occurs as a rhyme in "The Pilgrim Fathers." These three sonnets, I learn, from several quarters, have been well received by those of your countrymen whom they most concern.*

'Pray excuse this barren scrawl, and believe me, with high respect, and very gratefully,

'Yours,

'W. WORDSWORTH.'

To John Peace, Esq.

'*Rydal Mount, Dec.* 12, 1842.

'My dear Mr. Peace,

. . . . . .

'Poor Mr. Wade! From his own modest merits, and his long connection with Mr. Coleridge, and with my early

* [In a previous letter Mr. Wordsworth had thus referred to these poems, — 'I have sent you three sonnets upon certain "Aspects of Christianity in America," having, as you will see, a reference to the subject upon which you wished me to write. I wish

Bristol remembrances, he was to me an interesting person. His desire to have my address must have risen, I think, from a wish to communicate with me upon the subject of Mr. Allston's valuable portrait of Coleridge. Pray tell me what has, or is likely to, become of it. I care comparatively little about the matter, provided due care has been taken for its preservation, and in his native country. It would be a sad pity if the late owner's intention of sending it to America be fulfilled. It is the only likeness of the great original that ever gave me the least pleasure; and it is, in fact, most happily executed, as every one who has a distinct remembrance of what C. was at that time must with delight acknowledge, and would be glad to certify.*

. . . . . .

'Ever faithfully your friend,

'W. WORDSWORTH.'

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they had been more worthy of the subject; I hope, however, you will not disapprove of the connection which I have thought myself warranted in tracing between the Puritan fugitives and Episcopacy.' Letter to H. R., 'Rydal Mount, March 1, 1842.' — H. R.]

* [The high opinion which Wordsworth entertained of this portrait, and the interest he felt in the disposal of it, were thus expressed in a letter of the next year: — 'The account you give of my old Friend, for so I will presume to call him, Mr. Allston, was very gratifying to me. As I believe you know, we were made acquainted through Mr. Coleridge, who had lived in much intimacy with Mr. Allston at Rome. There is a most excellent portrait of Coleridge by Allston, about which I am very anxious; not knowing what will become of it, the late owner, Mr. Wade, for whom it was painted, being dead. My wish was, as I expressed to him a year and a half ago, that he should bequeath the portrait to Mr. Coleridge's only daughter for her life, to go after her day, to the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, or the College in that University where he was educated. But I have no know-

The following is to one of his nephews:

'*Rydal, March* 22, 1843.

'My dear C——,

'The papers will have informed you, before you receive this, of poor dear Southey's decease. He died yesterday morning about nine o'clock. Some little time since, he was seized with typhus fever, but he passed away without any outward signs of pain, as gently as possible. We are, of course, not without sadness upon the occasion, notwithstanding there has been, for years, cause why all who knew and loved him should wish for his deliverance.

. . . . . .

'I am, my dear C——,

'Your affectionate uncle,

'And faithful friend,

'W. WORDSWORTH.

'We have been reading with very much pleasure dear Charles's book, which he kindly sent us the other day.'

. . . . . .

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ledge that he acted upon this advice. His own inclination was to send the picture to the painter. I respected that inclination, and was well aware that Mr. Allston would prize it much for his deceased friend Coleridge's sake. I knew also that Mr. Coleridge had many ardent admirers in America; nevertheless, I could not suppress a wish that it should remain in England, it is so admirable a likeness of what that great and good man then was, both as to person, feature, air and character, and moreover, though there are several pictures of him in existence, and one by an Artist eminent in his day, viz., Northcote, there is not one in the least to be compared to this by Mr. Allston.' Letter to H. R. in 1843. See also on this subject the letter to Sir G. Beaumont, June 3, 1805, in Chap. XXIII. Vol. I. p. 308, of these 'Memoirs.' — H. R.]

and for your safe return to your own country, I remain, in the hope of hearing from you again,

'Most faithfully
Your much obliged,
'W. WORDSWORTH.

'My nephew is still in the Ionian Islands.'

To Professor Reed.

'*Rydal Mount, March*, 27, 1843.

'My dear Mr. Reed,

. . . . . .

'You give me pleasure by the interest you take in the various passages in which I speak of the poets, my contemporaries, who are no more: dear Southey, one of the most eminent, is just added to the list. A few days ago I went over to Keswick to attend his remains to their last earthly abode. For upwards of three years his mental faculties have been in a state of deplorable decay; and his powers of recognition, except very rarely and but for a moment, have been, during more than half that period, all but extinct. His bodily health was grievously impaired, and his medical attendant says that he must have died long since but for the very great strength of his natural constitution. As to his literary remains, they must be very considerable, but, except his epistolary correspondence, more or less unfinished. His letters cannot but be very numerous, and, if carefully collected and judiciously selected, will, I doubt not, add greatly to his reputation. He had a fine talent for that species of composition, and took much delight in throwing off his mind in that way. Mr. Taylor, the dramatic author, is his literary executor.

'Though I have written at great, and I fear tiresome, length, I will add a few words upon the wish you express that I would pay a tribute to the English poets of past ages, who never had the fame they are entitled to, and have long been almost entirely neglected. Had this been suggested to me earlier in life, or had it come into my thoughts, the thing in all probability would have been done. At present I cannot hope it will; but it may afford you some satisfaction to be told, that in the MS. poem upon my poetic education, there is a whole book, of about 600 lines,[1] upon my obligations to writers of imagination, and chiefly the poets, though I have not expressly named those to whom you allude, and for whom, and many others of their age, I have a high respect.

'The character of the schoolmaster, about whom you inquire, had, like the "Wanderer," in the "Excursion," a solid foundation in fact and reality, but, like him, it was also, in some degree, a composition: I will not, and need not, call it an invention — it was no such thing; but were I to enter into details, I fear it would impair the effect of the whole upon your mind; nor could I do it to my own satisfaction. I send you, according to your wish, the additions to the "Ecclesiastical Sonnets," and also the last poem from my pen. I threw it off two or three weeks ago, being in a great measure impelled to it by the desire I felt to do justice to the memory of a heroine, whose conduct presented, some time ago, a striking contrast to the inhumanity with which our countrymen, shipwrecked lately upon the French coast, have been treated.

'Ever most faithfully yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.

[1] Prelude, book v.

'I must request that "Grace Darling" may not be reprinted. I should be much obliged if you will have the enclosed Sonnets copied and sent to Bishop Doane, who has not given me his address.

'W. W.'

CHAPTER LVIII.

APPOINTMENT TO THE LAUREATESHIP.

Mr. Southey departed this life on the 21st March, 1843, and on the 31st of that month Mr. Wordsworth received a letter from the truly noble and honourable person who then filled the office of Lord Chamberlain, informing him in the most courteous terms, that, having the duty of taking the pleasure of the Queen, respecting the vacant office of Poet Laureate, he had no hesitation in coming to the conclusion that he should best discharge that duty by recommending that the offer of the appointment should be made to him, and that he had received the commands of the Queen to signify to him that Her Majesty approved the recommendation.

To this gracious intimation Mr. Wordsworth replied as follows:

To the Right Hon. Earl De La Warr, Lord Chamberlain.

'Rydal Mount, Ambleside, April 1, 1843.

'My Lord,

'The recommendation made by your Lordship to the Queen, and graciously approved by her Majesty, that the vacant office of Poet Laureate should be offered to me, affords me high gratification. Sincerely am I sensible of this honour; and let me be permitted to add, that the

being deemed worthy to succeed my lamented and revered friend, Mr. Southey, enhances the pleasure I receive upon this occasion.

'The appointment, I feel, however, imposes duties which, far advanced in life as I am, I cannot venture to undertake, and therefore must beg leave to decline the acceptance of an offer that I shall always remember with no unbecoming pride.

'Her Majesty will not, I trust, disapprove of a determination forced upon me by reflections which it is impossible for me to set aside.

'Deeply feeling the distinction conferred upon me, and grateful for the terms in which your Lordship has made the communication,

'I have the honour to be,

'My Lord,

'Your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,

'W. W.'

He then communicates the particulars of the offer to Lady F. Bentinck.

'The Lord Chamberlain, in terms the most honourable, has, with the Queen's approbation, offered me the vacant Laureateship. Had I been several years younger, I should have accepted the office with pride and pleasure; but on Friday I shall enter, God willing, my 74th year, and on account of so advanced an age, I begged permission to decline it, not venturing to undertake its duties. For though, as you are aware, the formal task-work of New Year and Birth-day Odes, was abolished[1] when the

[1] Mr. Southey's account in his Life and Correspondence renders this statement questionable.

appointment was given to Mr. Southey, he still considered himself obliged in conscience to produce, and did produce verses, some of very great merit, upon important public occasions. He failed to do so upon the Queen's Coronation, and I know that this omission caused him no little uneasiness. The same might happen to myself upon some important occasion, and I should be uneasy under the possibility; I hope, therefore, that neither you nor Lord Lonsdale, nor any of my friends, will blame me for what I have done.

'I was slow to send copies of "Grace Darling" about, except to female friends, lest I should seem to attach too much importance to the production, though it was on a subject which interested the whole nation. But as the verses seem to have given general pleasure, I now venture to send the enclosed copies, one for Mr. Colvill, and the other for my old friend Mr. O'Callaghan, begging that you would present them at your own convenience. With the best of good wishes, and every kind and respectful remembrance to Lord Lonsdale, who, we are happy to learn, is doing so well, and also not forgetting Miss Thompson, I remain, dear Lady Frederick,

'Most faithfully and affectionately yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

Mr. Wordsworth's letter did not, however, deter the Lord Chamberlain from pressing the offer upon him, with an assurance that the duties of Laureate had not recently extended beyond the Annual Ode, and might in his case be considered as merely nominal, and would not in any way interfere with his repose and retirement.

The same post brought also the following letter:

'*Whitehall, April* 3, 1843.

'My dear Sir,

'I hope you may be induced to reconsider your decision with regard to the appointment of Poet Laureate.

'The offer was made to you by the Lord Chamberlain, with my entire concurrence, not for the purpose of imposing on you any onerous or disagreeable duties, but in order to pay you that tribute of respect which is justly due to the first of living poets.

'The Queen entirely approved of the nomination, and there is one unanimous feeling on the part of all who have heard of the proposal (and it is pretty generally known) that there could not be a question about the selection.

'Do not be deterred by the fear of any obligations which the appointment may be supposed to imply. I will undertake that you shall have nothing *required* from you.

'But as the Queen can select for this honourable appointment no one whose claims for respect and honour, on account of eminence as a poet, can be placed in competition with yours, I trust you will not longer hesitate to accept it.

'Believe me, my dear Sir,

'With sincere esteem,

'Most faithfully yours,

'ROBERT PEEL.

'I write this in haste, from my place in the House of Commons.'

These letters had the desired effect in removing the aged Poet's scruples, and he was well pleased that the laureate wreath should be twined round his silver hair:

'Laura cinge volens, Melpomene, comam.'

He replied as follows:

To the Right Hon. the Earl De La Warr.

'*Rydal Mount, Ambleside, April* 4, 1843.

'My Lord,

'Being assured by your Lordship's letter, and by one from Sir Robert Peel, both received this day, that the appointment to the Laureateship is to be considered merely honorary, the apprehensions which at first compelled me to decline accepting the offer of that appointment are entirely removed.

'Sir Robert Peel has also done me the honour of uniting his wish with that which your Lordship has urged in a manner most gratifying to my feelings; so that, under these circumstances, and sanctioned as the recommendation has been by Her Majesty's gracious approval, it is with unalloyed pleasure that I accept this high distinction.

'I have the honour to be,

'My Lord,

'Most gratefully,

'Your Lordship's

'Obedient, humble servant,

'WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.'

To the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart., M. P.

'*Rydal Mount, Ambleside, April* 4, 1843.

'Dear Sir Robert,

'Having since my first acquaintance with Horace borne in mind the charge which he tells us frequently thrilled his ear,

"Solve senescentem maturè sanus equum, ne
Peccet ad extremum,"

I could not but be deterred from incurring responsibilities which I might not prove equal to at so late a period of life; but as my mind has been entirely set at ease by the very kind and most gratifying letter with which you have honoured me, and by a second communication from the Lord Chamberlain to the same effect, and in a like spirit, I have accepted, with unqualified pleasure, a distinction sanctioned by her Majesty, and which expresses, upon authority entitled to the highest respect, a sense of the national importance of poetic literature; and so favourable an opinion of the success with which it has been cultivated by one, who, after this additional mark of your esteem, cannot refrain from again assuring how deeply sensible he is of the many and great obligations he owes to your goodness, and who has the honour to be,

'Dear Sir Robert,
'Most faithfully,
'Your humble servant,
'WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.'

It was a happy thing for Mr. Wordsworth's peace of mind that the office of Poet Laureate had been accepted by him under the condition expressed in the above correspondence; for, after this period, his lyre was almost silent; he wrote but little, and only on the spur of occasional impulses. But it ought to be remembered, that by his *earlier* poetical effusions he had earned the bays *before* he wore them. He wrote laureate odes[1] *before* he was laureate. And *those* lyrical poems are more valuable, because they were not official, but the spontaneous effusions of inspira-

[1] For instance, the 'Thanksgiving Ode' on the Peace, 1815.

tion. He wrote them as the Poet Laureate of Nature, Order, Patriotism, and Truth.[1]*

[1] Mr. Wordsworth's appointment gave occasion to a very interesting Literary Essay on the Laureates of England by Mr. Quillinan, the perusal of which will excite a hope that the office of Laureate may never be abolished. That office is one of the links of the chain which binds the present to the past, none of which can well be spared, especially in these days; and it is a public homage to the powers and services of Poetry as a teacher of loyalty and patriotism.

* [The only poem composed by Wordsworth as Poet Laureate, and published, was the Ode on the Installation of Prince Albert as Chancellor of the University of Cambridge. This ode, like Gray's on a similar occasion in the same University, was set to music, and so produced as part of the ceremonies of the occasion, alluded to, in July 1847. — H. R.]

CHAPTER LIX.

PERSONAL HISTORY, 1843–1845.

To Professor Reed.

'*Rydal Mount, Aug.* 2, 1843.

'My dear Mr. Reed,

. . . . . .

'A few days ago I received a letter from a countryman of yours, the Rev. R. C. Waterston of Boston, communicating the intelligence of the death of that admirable artist and amiable man, my old friend, Mr. Allston. Mr. W. and I are not acquainted, and therefore I take it very kindly that he should have given me this melancholy information, with most interesting particulars of the last few hours of the life of the deceased. He also sent me a copy of verses addressed by himself to me, I presume some little time ago, and printed in the "Christian Souvenir." You have probably seen the lines, and, if so, I doubt not you will agree with me that they indicate a true feeling of the leading characteristics of my poems. At least I am sure that I wished them such as he represents them to be, too partially no doubt.

'It would give me pleasure could I make this letter, so long due, more worthy of perusal, by touching upon any topics of a public or private nature that might interest you; but beyond the assurance which I can give you, that

I and mine are and have been in good health, I know not where to find them. This spring I have not left home for London, or anywhere else; and during the progress of it and the summer I have had much pleasure in noting the flowers and blossoms, as they appeared and disappeared successively; an occupation from which, at least with reference to my own grounds, a residence in town for the three foregoing spring seasons cut me off. Though my health continues, thank God, to be very good, and I am active as most men of my age, my strength for very long walks among the mountains is of course diminishing; but, weak or strong in body, I shall ever remain, in heart and mind,

'Faithfully, your much obliged friend,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.

'*P. S.* Mr. Southey's literary executors are making a collection of his letters, which will prove highly interesting to the public, they are so gracefully and feelingly written.'

To Joseph Cottle, Esq.

'*Nov.* 24, 1843.

'My dear Mr. Cottle,

. . . . . .

'You have treated the momentous subject[1] of Socinianism in a masterly manner; entirely and absolutely convincing.

'Believe me to remain, my good old friend,

'With great respect,

'Faithfully yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

[1] The title of Mr. J. Cottle's work is 'Essays on Socinianism,' by Joseph Cottle. Lond.: Longmans.

To the Rev. Henry Alford.[1]

'*Rydal Mount, Feb.* 28, 1844.

'My dear Sir,

'I am pleased to hear what you are about, but I am far too advanced in life to venture upon anything so difficult to do as hymns of devotion.

'The one of mine which you allude to is quite at your service; only I could wish the first line of the fifth stanza to be altered thus:

"Each field is then a hallowed spot."

Or you might omit the stanza altogether, if you thought proper, the piece being long enough without it.

'Wishing heartily for your success, and knowing in what able hands the work is,

'I remain, my dear Sir,

'Faithfully yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

To Lady Frederick Bentinck.

'*March* 31, 1844.

'My dear Lady Frederick,

'We have known each other too long and too intimately for you not to be well aware of the reasons why I have not earlier condoled with you upon your bereavement.[2] I feel it deeply, and sympathize with you as much and as truly as you possibly could wish. I have

[1] This was written in answer to an inquiry whether Mr. Wordsworth had by him any hymns calculated for a collection which I was making, and asking permission to insert his 'Noonday Hymn.' — *H. A.*

[2] Lord Lonsdale's death.

also grieved for the rest of your family and household, and not the least for Miss Thompson, whose faithful and strong attachment to your revered father I have, for a long time, witnessed with delight and admiration. Through my kind friend Mr. O'Brien, I have heard of you both; and in his second letter he informs me, to my great sorrow, that Miss Thompson has been exceedingly ill. God grant that she may soon recover, as you both will stand in need of all your bodily strength to support you under so sad a loss. But, how much is there to be thankful for in every part of Lord Lonsdale's life to its close! How gently was he dealt with in his last moments! and with what fortitude and Christian resignation did he bear such pains as attended his decline, and prepared the way for his quiet dissolution! Of my own feelings upon this loss I shall content myself with saying, that as long as I retain consciousness I shall cherish the memory of your father, for his inestimable worth, and as one who honoured me with his friendship, and who was to myself and my children the best benefactor. The sympathy which I now offer, dear Lady Frederick, is shared by my wife and my daughter, and my son William; and will be also participated in by my elder son, when he hears of the sad event.

'I wrote to Dr. Jackson[1] to inquire whether the funeral was to be strictly private, and learnt from him that it is to be so; otherwise I should not have deprived myself of the melancholy satisfaction of attending. Accept, dear Lady Frederick, my best wishes; and be assured of my prayers for your support; and believe me,

'Your very affectionate friend,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

[1] The respected Rector of Lowther, and Chancellor of the Diocese.

To Professor Reed.

'*Rydal Mount*, 5th *July*, 1844.

'In your last letter you speak so feelingly of the manner in which my birthday (April 7,) has been noticed, both privately in your country, and somewhat publicly in my own neighbourhood, that I cannot forbear adding a word or two upon the subject. It would have delighted you to see the assemblage in front of our house, some dancing upon the gravel platform, old and young, as described in Goldsmith's travels; and others, children I mean, chasing each other upon the little plot of lawn to which you descend by steps from the platform. We had music of our own preparing; and two sets of casual itinerants, Italians and Germans, came in successively, and enlivened the festivity. There were present upward of 300 children, and about 150 adults of both sexes and all ages, the children in their best attire, and of that happy and, I may say, beautiful race, which is spread over this highly favoured portion of England. The tables were tastefully arranged in the open air[1] — oranges and gingerbread in piles decorated with evergreens and spring flowers; and all partook of tea, the young in the open air, and the old within doors. I must own I wish that little commemorations of this kind were more common among us. It is melancholy to think how little that portion of the community which is quite at ease in their circumstances have to do in a *social* way with the humbler classes. They purchase commodities of them, or they employ them as labourers, or they visit them in charity for the sake of supplying their most urgent wants by

[1] The fête was given by Miss F——, then at Rydal.

almsgiving. But this, alas, is far from enough; one would wish to see the rich mingle with the poor as much as may be upon a footing of fraternal equality. The old feudal dependencies and relations are almost gone from England, and nothing has yet come adequately to supply their place. There are tendencies of the right kind here and there, but they are rather accidental than aught that is established in general manners. Why should not great landowners look for a substitute for what is lost of feudal paternity in the higher principles of christianized humanity and humble-minded brotherhood? And why should not this extend to those vast communities which crowd so many parts of England under one head, in the different sorts of manufacture, which for the want of it, are too often the pests of the social state? We are, however, improving, and I trust that the example set by some mill-owners will not fail to influence others.

'It gave me pleasure to be told that Mr. Keble's Dedication of his "Prælectiones" had fallen in your way, and that you had been struck by it.[1] It is not for me to say how far I am entitled to the honour which he has done me, but I can sincerely say that it has been the main scope of my writings to do what he says I have accomplished. And where could I find a more trustworthy judge?

'What you advise in respect to a separate publication of my Church Poetry, I have often turned in my own mind; but I have really done so little in that way, compared with the magnitude of the subject, that I have not courage to venture on such a publication. Besides, it would not, I fear, pay its expenses. The Sonnets* were so published

[1] See above, Chap. XLV.

* [Of the sonnets Professor Wilson had said, 'Wordsworth's

upon the recommendation of a deceased nephew of mine, one of the first scholars of Europe, and as good as he was learned.* The volume did not, I believe, clear itself, and a great part of the impression, though latterly offered at a reduced price, still remains, I believe, in Mr. Moxon's hands. In this country, people who do not grudge laying out their money for new publications on personal or fugitive interests, that every one is talking about, are very unwilling to part with it for literature which is unindebted to temporary excitement. If they buy such at all, it must be in some form for the most part that has little to recommend it but low price.

'And now, my dear Sir, with many thanks for the trouble you have been at, and affectionate wishes for your welfare,

'Believe me faithfully yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

To Basil Montagu, Esq.

'*Rydal Mount, Oct.* 1, 1844.

'My dear Montagu,

'Absence from home has prevented my replying earlier to your letter, which gave me much pleasure on many accounts, and particularly as I learned from it that you are so industrious, and to such good effect. I don't wonder at your mention of the friends whom we have lost by death. Bowles, the poet, still lives, and Rogers — all that survive of the poetical fraternity with whom I have had any intimacy. Southey, Campbell, and Cary, are no

sonnets, were they all in one book, would be the statesman's — warrior's — priest's — sage's manual.' — Blackwood's Magazine, Vol. XLI. p. 447. — H. R.]

* [See above, Chap. LV. — H. R.]

more. Of my class-fellows and school-fellows, very few remain; my *intimate* associates of my own college are all gone long since. Myers my cousin, Terrot, Jones my fellow-traveller, Fleming, and his brother Raincock of Pembroke, Bishop Middleton of the same college—it has pleased God that I should survive them all. Then there are none left but Joseph Cottle, of the many friends I made at Bristol and in Somersetshire; yet we are only in our 75th year. But enough of this sad subject; let us be resigned under all dispensations, and thankful; for that is our duty, however difficult it may be to perform it. I send you the lock of hair which you desired, white as snow, and taken from a residue which is thinning rapidly.

'You neither mention your own health, nor Mrs. Montagu's; I conclude, therefore, that both of you are doing well. Pray remember me kindly to her; and believe me, my dear Montagu, your faithful and affectionate friend,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.

'In speaking of our Bristol friends, I forgot to mention John Pinney, but him I have neither seen nor heard of for many years.'

To Professor Reed.

'*Nov.* 18, 1844.

'My dear Mr. Reed,

'Mrs. Wordsworth and I have been absent from home for a month past, and we deferred acknowledging your acceptable letter till our return. Among the places to which we went on visits to our friends, was Cambridge, where I was happy to learn that great improvement was going on among the young men. They were become much more regular in their conduct, and attentive to their

duties. Our host was the master of Trinity College, Dr. Whewell, successor to my brother, Dr. Wordsworth,[1] who filled the office for more than twenty years, highly to his honour, and resigned before he was disqualified by age, lest, as his years advanced, his judgment might be impaired, and his powers become unfit for the responsibility, without his being aware of it. This, you will agree with me, was a noble example: may it be followed by others!

'On our return home, we were detained two hours at Northampton, by the vast crowd assembled to greet the Queen on her way to Burleigh House. Shouts and ringing of bells there were in abundance; but these are things of course. It did please us, however, greatly to see every village we passed through for the space of twenty-two miles, decorated with triumphal arches, and every cottage, however humble, with its little display of laurel boughs and flowers hung from the windows and over the doors. The people, young and old, were all making it holiday, and the Queen could not but be affected with these universal manifestations of affectionate loyalty. As I have said, we were detained two hours, and I much regret that it did not strike me at the moment to throw off my feelings in verse, for I had ample time to have done so, and might, perhaps, have contrived to present, through some of the authorities, the tribute to my Royal Mistress. How must these words shock your republican ears! But you are too well acquainted with mankind and their history, not to be aware that love of country can clothe itself in many shapes.

'I need not say what pleasure it would give us to see you and Mrs. Reed in our beautiful place of abode.

'I have no wish to see the review of my poems to

[1] See above, p. 391.

which you allude, nor should I read it if it fell in my way. It is too late in life for me to profit by censure, and I am indifferent to praise merely as such.* Mrs. Wordsworth

* [The equanimity with which Wordsworth listened alike to critical praise and censure, was shown in a letter written some years before:

Henry Reed, Esq., Philadelphia.

'*Rydal Mount, Feb.* 22, 1839.

'My dear Sir,

. . . . . .

'. . . . I had received and read the article before, the 'New York Review' having been sent me from London [by a friend] to whom I have been obliged in the same way occasionally. In respect to one particular both in your letter and critique, I can speak without diffidence or hesitation, — I mean the affectionate tone in which you give vent to your feelings of admiration and gratitude. "Grant me thy love, I crave no other fee," is the concluding line of a valedictory sonnet at the close of a volume (lately published by Mr. Moxon) consisting of my sonnets only. This sentiment is, I assure you, predominant in my mind and heart; and I know no test more to be relied upon than acknowledgments such as yours, provided the like have been received from persons of both sexes, of all ages, and who have lived in different latitudes, in widely different states of society, and in conditions little resembling each other. Beyond what I have now said, I feel scrupulous in expressing the gratification with which I read your critique, being so highly encomiastic as it is: all that I can say with confidence is, that I endeavoured to do what much and long reflection on your part justifies you to your own mind in saying I *have* done. It may amuse you to hear an odd proof that those poems, for whose fate you entertain no doubt, are yet *sub judice* elsewhere: in the "Delhi Gazette" — mark the place — a vituperative article appeared not long ago upon the subject, which was answered by another writer with great zeal and ardour, to the entertainment no doubt of the Palankeen critics of that enervating climate.

. . . . . .

'Affectionately yours,

'Wm. Wordsworth.' — H. R.]

will be happy to write her opinion of the portrait as you request.

'Believe me, my dear Mr. Reed,
'Faithfully yours,
WM. WORDSWORTH.'

To Professor Reed.

'*Rydal Mount, Ambleside, July* 1, 1845.

'My dear Mr. Reed,

'I have, as usual, been long in your debt, which I am pretty sure you will excuse as heretofore. It gave me much pleasure to have a glimpse of your brother under circumstances which no doubt he will have described to you. He spoke of his health as improved, and I hope it will continue to do so. I understood from him that it was probable he should call at Rydal before his return to his own country. I need not say to you I shall be glad, truly glad, to see him both for his own sake, and as so nearly connected with you. My absence from home lately was not of more than three weeks. I took the journey to London solely to pay my respects to the Queen upon my appointment to the Laureateship upon the decease of my friend Mr. Southey. The weather was very cold, and I caught an inflammation in one of my eyes, which rendered my stay in the south very uncomfortable. I nevertheless did, in respect to the object of my journey, all that was required. The reception given me by the Queen at her ball was most gracious. Mrs. Everett, the wife of your minister, among many others, was a witness to it, without knowing who I was. It moved her to the shedding of tears. This effect was in part produced, I suppose, by American habits of feeling, as pertaining to a republican government. To see a grey-haired man of

seventy-five years of age, kneeling down in a large assembly to kiss the hand of a young woman, is a sight for which institutions essentially democratic do not prepare a spectator of either sex, and must naturally place the opinions upon which a republic is founded, and the sentiments which support it, in strong contrast with a government based and upheld as ours is. I am not, therefore, surprised that Mrs. Everett was moved, as she herself described to persons of my acquaintance, among others to Mr. Rogers the poet. By the by, of this gentleman, now I believe in his eighty-third year, I saw more than of any other person except my host, Mr. Moxon, while I was in London. He is singularly fresh and strong for his years, and his mental faculties (with the exception of his memory a little) not at all impaired. It is remarkable that he and the Rev. W. Bowles were both distinguished as poets when I was a school-boy, and they have survived almost all their eminent contemporaries, several of whom came into notice long after them. Since they became known, Burns, Cowper, Mason the author of "Caractacus" and friend of Gray, have died. Thomas Warton, Laureate, then Byron, Shelley, Keats, and a good deal later [1] Scott, Coleridge, Crabbe, Southey, Lamb, the Ettrick Shepherd, Cary the translator of Dante, Crowe the author of "Lewesdon Hill," and others of more or less distinction, have disappeared. And now of English poets, advanced in life, I cannot recall any but James Montgomery, Thomas

[1] Walter Scott - - - - died 21st Sept., 1832.
S. T. Coleridge - - - - " 25th July, 1834.
Charles Lamb - - - - " 27th Dec., 1834.
Geo. Crabbe - - - - " 3d Feb., 1832.
Felicia Hemans - - - - " 16th May, 1835.
Robert Southey - - - - " 21st March, 1843.

Moore, and myself, who are living, except the octogenarian with whom I began.

'I saw Tennyson, when I was in London, several times. He is decidedly the first of our living poets, and I hope will live to give the world still better things. You will be pleased to hear that he expressed in the strongest terms his gratitude to my writings. To this I was far from indifferent, though persuaded that he is not much in sympathy with what I should myself most value in my attempts, viz., the spirituality with which I have endeavoured to invest the material universe, and the moral relations under which I have wished to exhibit its most ordinary appearances. I ought not to conclude this first portion of my letter without telling you that I have now under my roof a cousin, who some time ago was introduced, improperly, I think, she being then a child, to the notice of the public, as one of the English poètesses, in an article of the Quarterly so entitled. Her name is Emmeline Fisher, and her mother is my first cousin. What advances she may have made in latter years I do not know, but her productions from the age of eight to twelve were not less than astonishing. She only arrived yesterday, and we promise ourselves much pleasure in seeing more of her. Our dear friend Miss Fenwick is also under our roof; so is Katharine Southey, her late father's youngest daughter; so that we reckon ourselves rich; though our only daughter is far from us, being gone to Oporto with her husband on account of her enfeebled frame: and most unfortunately, soon after her arrival, she was seized with a violent attack of rheumatic fever caused by exposure to the evening air. We have also been obliged lately to part with four grandsons, very fine boys, who are gone with their father to Italy to visit their mother, kept there by severe illness, which sent her

abroad two years ago. Under these circumstances we old people keep our spirits as well as we can, trusting the end to God's goodness.

'Now for the enclosed Poem,[1] which I wrote the other day, and which I send to you, hoping it may give you some pleasure, as a scanty repayment for all that we owe you. Our dear friend, Miss Fenwick, is especially desirous that her warmest thanks should be returned to you for all the trouble you have taken about her bonds. But, to return to the verses: if you approve, pray forward them with my compliments and thanks for his letter to ——. In his letter he states that with others he is strenuously exerting himself in endeavours to abolish slavery, and, as one of the means of disposing the public mind to that measure, he is about to publish selections from various authors in behalf of *humanity*. He begs an original composition from me. I have nothing bearing directly upon slavery, but if you think this little piece would serve his cause indirectly, pray be so kind as to forward it to him. He speaks of himself as deeply indebted to my writings.

[1] The Poem enclosed is 'The Westmoreland Girl,' dated June 6, 1845. The text corresponds with that in the one volume edition, with the exception of the two stanzas added in the next letter; and in the 1st stanza 'thoughtless' has been substituted for 'simple;' and in the 18th 'is laid' for 'must lie.' * — *H. R.*

* [Of this poem (Vol. I. p. 183) addressed to his grandchildren, Mr. Wordsworth said in a later letter: 'The little poem, which I ventured to send you lately, I thought might interest you, on account of the fact as exhibiting what sort of characters our mountains breed. It is truth to the letter.' He mentions that a concluding stanza is added, because 'It was thought by some of my friends that the other conclusion took the mind too much away from the subject.' Letter to H. R. 'Rydal Mount, 31st July, 1845.' — H. R.]

'I have not left room to subscribe myself more than

'Affectionately yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

To Professor Reed.

'*Brinsop Court, Sept.* 27, [1845.]

'My dear Mr. Reed,

'The sight of your letter was very welcome, and its contents proved most agreeable. It was well that you did not forward my little poem to the party, he entertaining the opinions he holds, and being of the character you describe. I shall therefore be gratified if you, as you propose, write him a note, expressing that I have nothing among my MSS. that would suit his purpose. The verses are already printed in the new edition of my poems (double column), which is going through the press.* It will contain about 300 verses not found in the previous edition. I do not remember whether I have mentioned to you that, following your example, I have greatly extended the class entitled "Poems of the Imagination," thinking, as you must have done, that if imagination were predominant in the class, it was not indispensable that it should pervade every poem which it contained. Limiting the class as I had done before, seemed to imply, and to the uncandid or unobserving it did so, that the faculty, which is the *primum mobile* in poetry, had little to do, in the estimation of the author, with the pieces not arranged under that head. I, therefore, feel much obliged to you for

* [This was the edition of 1845 — the first edition of the poems arranged by the Author in one volume. It is embellished with an engraving of Chantrey's bust of Wordsworth, and with one of a picture of Rydal Mount. — H. R.]

suggesting by your practice the plan which I have adopted. In respect to the Prefaces, my own wish would be that now the Poems should be left to speak for themselves without them; but I know that this would not answer for the purposes of sale. They will, therefore, be printed at the end of the volume; and to this I am in some degree reconciled by the matter they contain relating to poetry in general, and the principles they inculcate. I hope that, upon the whole, the edition will please you. In a very few instances I have altered the expression for the worse, on account of the same feeling or word occurring rather too near the passage. For example, the Sonnet on Baptism begins "*Blest* be the Church." But unfortunately the word occurs some three or four lines just before or after; I have, therefore, though reluctantly, substituted the less impressive word, "*Dear* be the Church." I mention this solely to prevent blame on your part in this and a few similar cases where an injurious change has been made. The book will be off my hands I hope in about two weeks.

. . . . . .

'Mrs. Wordsworth and I left home four days ago, and do not intend to return, if all goes well, in less than five or six weeks from this time. We purpose in our way home to visit York, the cathedral of which city has been restored; and then we shall go to Leeds, on a visit to our friend Mr. James Marshall, in full expectation that we shall be highly delighted by the humane and judicious manner in which his manufactory is managed, and by inspecting the schools which he and his brother have established and superintend. We also promise ourselves much pleasure from the sight of the magnificent church, which, upon the foundation of the old parish church of that town, has been built through the exertions and by the

munificence of the present incumbent, that excellent and able man Dr. Hook, whom I have the honour of reckoning among my friends.

'This letter is written by the side of my brother-in-law, who, eight years ago, became a cripple, confined to his chair, by the accident of his horse falling with him in the high road, where he lay without power to move either hand or leg, but left in perfect possession of his faculties. His bodily sufferings are by this time somewhat abated, but they still continue severe. His patience and cheerfulness are so admirable that I could not forbear mentioning him to you. He is an example to us all; and most undeserving should we be if we did not profit by it. His family have lately succeeded in persuading him to have his portrait taken as he sits in his arm-chair. It is an excellent likeness, one of the best I ever saw, and will be invaluable to his family. This reminds me of Mr. Inman and a promise which he made that he would send us a copy of your portrait of myself. I say a promise, though it scarcely amounted to that absolutely, but it was little short of it. Do you think he could find time to act upon his own wish in this matter? in which I feel interested on Mrs. Wordsworth's account, who reckons that portrait much the best both as to likeness and execution of all that have been made of me, and she is an excellent judge. In adverting to this subject, I of course presume that you would have no objection to the picture being copied if the artist were inclined to do it.

'My paper admonishes me that I must conclude. Pray let me know in your next how Mrs. Reed and your family are in health, and present my good wishes to her.

'Ever, your faithful

'And much obliged friend,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

[The portrait alluded to in this letter was painted by the late Henry Inman, in the summer of 1844, at Rydal Mount.

Mr. Inman's letter, describing his professional visit, will be read with interest, though but imperfectly representing his fine conversational powers when speaking on the same subject:

'*New York, June* 23, 1845.

'My dear Sir,

. . . . . .

'Mr. Wordsworth's reception of me, and the brief professional and social intercourse I enjoyed with him and his excellent family, furnish me with none but the most pleasing recollections. He seemed to be much gratified with your request for his portrait; and though his house teems with tokens of regard from his countrymen, he evidently had a peculiar value for this transatlantic compliment to his genius. On a fine morning (I think it was the 20th of August, 1844), I made my first visit to Rydal Mount. I found the house of the Poet most delightfully situated — a long, low cottage almost buried among trees and clustering vines. It is built upon a small eminence, called Rydal Mount, and behind the house the cliffs of Fairfield Fell rise in picturesque beauty; and from its rocky ravine issues forth a pleasing waterfall or "Force," called Rydal Falls, whose waters precipitate themselves in two sheets a few hundred yards from the house.

'Mr. Wordsworth received me with unaffected courtesy; and my first close and technical observation of him did not fail to note the peculiarly genial smile, which lights up a face full of intelligence and good nature.

'I took sittings of him nearly every day, and in the presence of Mrs. Wordsworth and his daughter, and a son (a fine looking young man, holding some government appointment, I believe, at Carlisle.)

'It was delightful to mark the close and kindly sympathy that seemed to bind the aged Poet and his wife together. They had known each other from the early period of infancy, having gone to the same school at three years of age. She sat close at his side, when the sittings were taken, and the good old man frequently, in the course of a conversation mainly addressed to myself, turned to her with an affectionate inquiry for her opinion respecting the sentiment he had just expressed, and listened with interest to her replies. . . . . The Poet accompanied me

twice on my sketching excursions, and pointed out various points of view, which seemed favourable as subjects for the pencil. In walking over his own grounds he would pause occasionally to invite my attention to some fine old tree, whose "*verdurous* torso" (that was his phrase) chanced to strike his imagination as worthy of remark. He would point to its gnarled and tortuous trunk with the same gusto with which the statuary might scan a fragment from the chisel of Phidias. His gallery of gems were all from the hand of nature — the moss-covered rock, the shining cascade, the placid lake, or splintered mountain-pinnacle seemed each to constitute for him a prideful possession — and well they might, for his footstep has during a long life pervaded every marked point of interest in that picturesque region.

'When the picture was finished, he said all that should satisfy my anxious desire for a successful termination to my labours. His wife, son, and daughter, all declared their approval of my work. He told me he had sat twenty-seven times to various artists, and that my picture was the best likeness of them all. Pray excuse this irregular and hasty scrawl, and believe me

'Your obliged and obedient servant,

'H. INMAN.

'P. S. The poem you quote is the one I heard as breathed from the lips of the venerable poet, while the same quivering sunshine, that first inspired his muse with those fine reflections, played in restless lustre over his cheeks and temples. H. I.

'Professor HENRY REED, Philadelphia.'

The allusion in the postscript is to a little incident which Mr. Inman had mentioned to me in conversation. During one of his days at Rydal Mount his eye (sensitive to delicately beautiful appearances of nature) caught the fine effect of light and shade produced by sunshine and the glancing shadows of leaves upon the lawn. He remarked it to Mr. Wordsworth, who repeated the lines he had composed on the same phenomenon — the stanzas beginning,

'This lawn, a carpet all alive
With shadows flung from leaves'—

(Vol. IV. p. 228.)

Mr. Inman indicated the poem by his recollection of one phrase

which appeared to have impressed itself, by its poetic beauty, deeply on his fancy:—'*A press of sunshine*' was, he said, an expression which still clung to his memory.

It is due to the memory of the artist that I should not withhold the opinion, alluded to in one of the letters in this chapter, as expressed by Mrs. Wordsworth respecting the portrait: Writing Nov. 18, 1844, Mrs. W. said: '. . . . . I can have no hesitation in saying, that in my opinion, and what is of more value, to *my feelings*, Mr. Inman's portrait of my husband is the best likeness that has been taken of him. And I am happy on this occasion to congratulate you and Mrs. Reed upon the possession of so valuable a treasure: at the same time I must express the obligation I feel to the painter for having produced so faithful a record. To this testimony I may add, that my daughter and her younger brother (her elder is abroad and has not seen it) are as much satisfied with the portrait of their father as I am.

'Believe me, dear Sir, with respectful regards to Mrs. Reed, very sincerely your obliged M. WORDSWORTH.'

The following lines by the late Hartley Coleridge, the eldest son of Wordsworth's old friend, and for many years a resident in the neighbourhood of Rydal Mount, have a connection with the 'personal history of 1845.'

'To W. W.

ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY.

Happy the year, the month, that finds alive
A worthy man in health at seventy-five.
Were he man no further known than loved,
And but for unremember'd deeds approved,
A gracious boon it were from God to earth
To leave that good man by his humble hearth.
But if the man be one whose virtuous youth,
Loving all Nature, was in love with truth;
And with the fervour of religious duty
Sought in all shapes the very form of beauty;—

Feeling the current of the tuneful strain,
Joy in his heart, and light upon his brain,
Knew that the gift was given, and not in vain;
Whose careful manhood never spared to prune
What the rash growth of youth put forth too soon;
Too wise to be ashamed to grow more wise;
Culling the truth from specious fallacies; —
Then may the world rejoice to find alive
So good, so great a man at seventy-five.'

'Poems of Hartley Coleridge, London, 1851.' Vol. II. p. 160.— H. N.]

CHAPTER LX.

PERSONAL HISTORY, 1846.

To Professor Reed.

'*Rydal Mount, Jan.* 23, 1846.

'My dear Mr. Reed,

. . . . . .

'I hope to be able to send you an impression of an engraving, from a picture of Mr. Haydon, representing me in the act of climbing Helvellyn. There is great merit in this work, and the sight of it will show my meaning on the subject of *expression*. This, I think, is attained; but, then, I am stooping, and the inclination of the head necessarily causes a foreshortening of the features below the nose, which takes from the likeness accordingly; so that, upon the whole, yours has the advantage, especially under the circumstance of your never having seen the original. Mrs. Wordsworth has been looking over your letters in vain to find the address of the person in London, through whose hands any parcel for you might be sent. Pray take the trouble of repeating the address in your next letter, and your request shall be attended to of sending you my two letters upon the offensive subject of a Railway to and through our beautiful neighbourhood.

. . . . . .

'You will be sorry to hear that Mrs. Wordsworth and I

have been, and still are, under great trouble and anxiety. Our daughter-in-law fell into bad health between three and four years ago. She went with her husband to Madeira, where they remained nearly a year; she was then advised to go to Italy. After a prolonged residence there, her six children, whom her husband returned to England for, went, at her earnest request, to that country, under their father's guidance: there he was obliged, on account of his duty as a clergyman, to leave them. Four of the number resided with their mother at Rome, three of whom took a fever there, of which the youngest, as noble a boy, of nearly five years, as ever was seen, died, being seized with convulsions when the fever was somewhat subdued. The father, in a distracted state of mind, is just gone back to Italy; and we are most anxious to hear the result. My only surviving brother, also, the late Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and an inestimable person, is in an alarming state of health; and the only child of my eldest brother, long since deceased, is now languishing under mortal illness at Ambleside. He was educated to the medical profession, and caught his illness while on duty in the Mediterranean. He is a truly amiable and excellent young man, and will be universally regretted. These sad occurrences, with others of like kind, have thrown my mind into a state of feeling, which the other day vented itself in the two sonnets, which Mrs. Wordsworth will transcribe as the best acknowledgment she can make for Mrs. Reed's and your kindness.

'Ever faithfully and affectionately yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.'

'Why should we weep or mourn, angelic boy,
For such thou wert, ere from our sight removed,
Holy and ever dutiful — beloved
From day to day, with never-ceasing joy,

And hopes as dear as could the heart employ
In aught to earth pertaining? Death has proved
His might, nor less his mercy, as behoved:
Death, conscious that he only could destroy
The bodily frame. That beauty is laid low
To moulder in a far-off field of Rome:
But heaven is now, blest child, thy spirit's home.
When this divine communion which we know
Is felt, thy Roman burial-place will be
Surely a sweet remembrancer of thee.' [1]

'Where lies the truth? has man in wisdom's creed
A piteous doom; for respite brief,
A care more anxious, or a heavier grief?
Is he ungrateful, and doth little heed
God's bounty, soon forgotten? or indeed
Who that lies down and may not wake to sorrow,
When flowers rejoice, and larks with rival speed
Spring from their nests to bid the sun good morrow?
They mount for rapture; this their songs proclaim,
Warbled in hearing both of earth and sky;
But o'er the contrast wherefore heave a sigh?
Like these aspirants let us soar — our aim
Through life's worst trials, whether shocks or snares,
A happier, brighter, purer heaven than theirs.' [2]

To Professor Reed.

'*February* 3, 1846.

'My dear Mr. Reed,

'I was much shocked to find that my last had been despatched without acknowledgment for your kindness in sending me the admirable engraving of Bishop White, which I was delighted, on many accounts, to receive. This omission was owing to the distressed state of mind in which I wrote, and which I throw myself on your

[1] Vol. v. p. 134.

[2] Vol. iv. p. 142.

goodness to excuse. I ought to have written again by next post, but we really have been, and still are, in such trouble from various causes, that I could not take up the pen, and now must beg you to accept this statement as the only excuse which I can offer. We have had such accounts from my daughter-in-law at Rome, that her mother and brother are just gone thither to support her, her mother being seventy years of age.

'Do you know anything of a wretched set of religionists in your country, *Superstitionists* I ought to say, called Mormonites, or latter-day saints? Would you believe it? a niece of Mrs. Wordsworth's has just embarked, we believe at Liverpool, with a set of the deluded followers of that wretch, in an attempt to join their society. Her name is ———, a young woman of good abilities, and well educated, but early in life she took from her mother and her connections a methodistical turn, and has gone on in a course of what she supposes to be piety till she has come to this miserable close. If you should by chance hear anything about her, pray let us know.

'The report of my brother's decease, which we look for every day, has not yet reached us. My nephew is still lingering on from day to day.

'Ever faithfully and affectionately yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.

'The print of Bishop White is noble, everything, indeed, that could be wished.'

Mr. Wordsworth's brother — his only surviving brother — whose approaching dissolution he apprehended when he wrote the last letter, was the Rev. Christopher Wordsworth, D. D., formerly Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and,

after his retirement from that office in 1841, resident at Buxted, Sussex, of which parish he was rector. He departed this life on the 2d day of February, 1846, in the 72d year of his age, and was buried in Buxted churchyard.

Some incidental notices of his life and character have been inserted in these pages.[1]

His career was an active one, very different in character, and far removed by distance, from that of his brother William, and, consequently, their personal intercourse was not frequent. But the feelings of the two brothers towards each other were those of high respect and tender affection. Dr. Wordsworth's estimate of his brother's poetry has been already recorded. The Poet's volumes were his constant companions, and, it is unnecessary to add, were an exhaustless source of delight and refreshment to his mind.

Dr. Wordsworth's literary labours were mainly of a professional kind. In the year 1802, when a junior fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, he published 'Six Letters to Granville Sharp, Esq., respecting his remarks on the Uses of the Definitive Article in the Greek Text of the New Testament,' a volume which was honoured with the eulogies of Bishop Horsley and Bishop Middleton. In 1809 appeared the first edition of his 'Ecclesiastical Biography,' in six volumes, octavo, which was reprinted in 1818, and (with additions) in 1839, in four volumes.

The design of this work was to present an historical view of the Church in England from the earliest times to the Revolution, mainly in the form of lives of eminent men. These volumes are enriched with valuable annotations from the editor's pen. Frequent references to this work will be found in the notes attached to his brother's

[1] See above, Vol. I. p. 31; Vol. II. p. 96.

'Ecclesiastical Sonnets,' and in almost all the subsequent histories of the English Church and Reformation.

In 1814, he printed two volumes of Sermons, preached, for the most part, at Bocking. In 1819 he published two pamphlets on the constitution of 'The British and Foreign Bible Society.'[1] In 1824 and 1828 he produced two very elaborate volumes on the authorship of *Icôn Basilikè*, which he unhesitatingly ascribed to King Charles I. Mr. Wordsworth's judgment on this work has been quoted *above*:[2] Mr. Southey's opinion coincided with it.

Dr. Wordsworth's last important literary work was his 'Christian Institutes,' in four volumes, octavo, published in 1837, and designed specially for the Use of Students in the University, and Candidates for Holy Orders. These volumes form a compendious library of English Theology, and will be found of great value to those two classes especially.

The present is not a proper occasion for dilating on his exertions in co-operation with those of other valued friends, especially the late Bishop Van Mildert, Archdeacon Watson, the Rev. H. H. Norris, and Joshua Watson, Esq., in behalf of the Church Societies; nor will I do more than advert to the benefits of a permanent nature which accrued to the important parishes of Bocking and Lambeth, successively, during his incumbency. Nor would it be relevant to dwell, in this place, on the results of his public labours in the office of Master of the greatest College in the University of Cambridge, for a period of twenty-one years. But with reference to one important part of his conduct in that capacity, I feel constrained, by regard for public interests as well as by a sense of private duty, not to omit the following communication from a per-

[1] See above, p. 8. [2] See p. 135, 136.

son, who, from his position and knowledge, is better qualified than any other individual to speak on this subject, the present able and judicious bursar of Trinity College, the Rev. Francis Martin, who writes to me as follows:

'*Trinity College, Cambridge, Dec.* 17, 1850.

'My dear Wordsworth,

'I have much pleasure in supplying you with some particulars respecting the management of the affairs of our College, which especially distinguished your father's Mastership. And I have no hesitation in saying, that the great feature in his administration was the extreme liberality which he advocated in the disposition of our revenues; particularly in any matter relating to the improvement of the small livings in the patronage of the society, the building of parsonage-houses, the founding and supporting of parish schools, or the erection of new churches.

'But we are most deeply indebted to him for maintaining the principle, first adopted on a great scale at the commencement of his Mastership, of largely increasing the rents reserved in the college leases, and of running out all leases where this principle was objected to on the part of the lessees. I should scarcely be credited if I were to state the pecuniary sacrifice which the Master personally, and the Seniors in a proportionate degree, sustained by this course; for not only were many fines forborne entirely, but as the increased rents did not take effect till the expiration of the existing leases, the advantage was remote and entirely prospective. The present Society are reaping the benefits of these measures, and are enabled to make great improvements in the value of their livings, and to contemplate the adoption of the same course to a much larger extent.

'We are also mainly, if not entirely, indebted to Dr.

Wordsworth, for the erection of a new quadrangle in the College, which accommodates more than a hundred students. He set about this great work before he had been Master six months, and, notwithstanding considerable difficulties, and some opposition at first, his endeavours met with complete success. By his great influence and zealous exertions, a large sum (above 12,358*l.*) [1] was contributed towards the undertaking, the whole cost of which was 50,424*l.*; and one fourth part of the rents of the apartments (amounting to above 600*l.* per annum) has been appropriated to the augmentation and improvement of the ecclesiastical benefices of the College. It would be difficult to overrate the importance of this, and other means which were adopted, all directed to the same end, namely, of increasing the value of our livings,[2] and so rendering them worthy of the acceptance of a fellow, by which the succession to fellowships is made more rapid, and the number of elections more adequate to the increased number of deserving candidates; and that, too, in a manner most accordant with the designs of our Founder, and the grand objects of the institution. How entirely the Master had this matter at heart, will appear by an extract from a letter which he wrote to the Vice-master, very soon after his resignation of the Mastership. "I shall esteem myself highly obliged by being permitted to offer a benefaction of

[1] Including 1000*l.* from his Majesty King George IV., and 2000*l.* from the corporate funds of Trinity College.

[2] At the commencement of Dr. Wordsworth's mastership the college livings were, for the most part, of very slender value. They are sixty in number. Of these, the annual income of twenty-nine did not exceed 150*l.*; and among these twenty-nine, the value of seven was not more than 50*l.*, and the value of ten more was not above 100*l.* per annum. And of the remaining thirty-one livings about twenty did not exceed 300*l.* per annnum.

five hundred pounds, as a very slight memorial of my affection to the College, to be carried to the account of the 'Pigott Fund,' for the augmentation of our poor vicarages; a department of the society's concerns, notwithstanding all that has been done in many past years, still capable of additional improvement."

'Believe me, my dear Wordsworth,

'Yours most truly,

'FRAS. MARTIN.'

[The two poems communicated in the letter of January 23, 1846, in this chapter, and described at that time as having been very recently composed, are the last of Wordsworth's poetical compositions referred to in these 'Memoirs.' The first of these sonnets — the Poet's elegy on his grandchild — is placed in the last edition in the class of 'Epitaphs and Elegiac Pieces': the second among the 'Evening Voluntaries.'

The last edition of 'The Poetical Works,' that of 1849-50, in six volumes, which was completed in the last months of Wordsworth's life, contains a few other poems, bearing the date of the same year — 1846. They are as follows:

Sonnet, 'To Lucca Giordano' — 'Evening Voluntaries' — Vol. IV. p. 141. (See Chap. III. Vol. I. of these 'Memoirs.')

Sonnet, 'Who but is pleased to watch the moon on high' — 'Evening Voluntaries' — Vol. IV. p. 141.

Sonnet, 'Illustrated Books and Newspapers.' — Vol. IV. p. 202.

Sonnet, 'To An Octogenarian.' — Vol. V. p. 21.

The lines beginning, 'I know an aged man constrained to dwell' — vol. V. p. 20. This poem may be regarded as a kind of companion-picture to 'The Old Cumberland Beggar' — composed very nearly fifty years before; and has an interest, as showing the same poetic teaching of the sympathy between Nature and Nature's voiceless creatures, and the poor and forlorn among men.

Another short piece, dated 1846, recalls a yet earlier poem. In the 'Evening Walk' (Vol. i. p. 14) composed near sixty years before, the Poet spoke of

'The song of mountain-streams, unheard by day,'

and the following lines, composed at the age of seventy-six years, show in the aged Poet a more exquisite as well as more meditative sensibility to the influences of nature, in listening to the night voice of the waters in a region of mountain and lake:

'The unremitting voice of nightly streams
That wastes so oft, we think, its tuneful powers,
If neither soothing to the worm that gleams
Through dewy grass, nor small birds hushed in bowers,
Nor unto silent leaves and drowsy flowers, —
That voice of unpretending harmony
(For who what is shall measure by what seems
To be, or not to be,
Or tax high Heaven with prodigality?)
Wants not a healing influence that can creep
Into the human breast, and mix with sleep
To regulate the motion of our dreams
For kindly issues — as through every clime
Was felt near murmuring brooks in earliest time;
As at this day, the rudest swains who dwell
Where torrents roar, or hear the tinkling knell
Of water-breaks, with grateful heart could tell.'

Vol. IV. p. 233.

In the last edition the two following pieces also appeared, but without any date of composition attached to them:

'How beautiful the Queen of Night, on high.'

Vol. V. p. 23.

And Inscription 'On the Banks of a Rocky Stream,'

'Behold an emblem of our human mind.'

Vol. V. p. 71.

See also, on the subject of Mr. Wordsworth's last sentences prepared for the press, note in Chap. XLI., p. 116, of this volume. — H. R.]

CHAPTER LXI.

PERSONAL HISTORY.

In the autumn of the year 1838, the University of Durham took the lead in conferring an academic distinction on Mr. Wordsworth, in recognition of the public services rendered by him to the literature of his country. This example, as has been recorded above,[1] was followed in 1839, by the University of Oxford. Scotland showed a generous disposition to pay a similar honour to a Poet who sung her praises with affectionate rapture. This circumstance is thus noticed by Mr. Wordsworth.

To Sir W. Gomm, &c. &c., Port Louis, Mauritius.

'*Rydal Mount, Ambleside, Nov.* 23, 1846.

'Dear Sir William,

'Your kind letter of the 4th of August, I have just received; and I thank you sincerely for this mark of your attention, and for the gratification it afforded me. It is pleasing to see fancy amusements giving birth to works of solid profit, as, under the auspices of Lady Gomm, they are doing in your island.

'Your sonnet addressed to the unfinished monument of Governor Malartie, is conceived with appropriate feeling

[1] Page 358.

and just discrimination. Long may the finished monument last as a tribute to departed worth, and as a check and restraint upon intemperate desires for change, to which the inhabitants of the island may hereafter be liable!

'Before this letter reaches you, the newspapers will probably have told you that I have been recently put in nomination, unknown to myself, for the high office of Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow; and that there was a majority of twenty-one votes in my favour, in opposition to the premier, Lord John Russell. The forms of the election, however, allowed Lord John Russell to be returned, through the single vote of the sub-rector voting for his superior. To say the truth, I am glad of this result; being too advanced in life to undertake with comfort any considerable public duty, and it might have seemed ungracious to decline the office.

'Men of rank, or of high station, with the exception of the poet Campbell, who was, I believe, educated at this university, have almost invariably been chosen for a rector of this ancient university; and that another exception was made in my favour by a considerable majority, affords a proof that literature, independent of office, does not want due estimation. I should not have dwelt so long upon this subject, had anything personal to myself occurred, in which you could have taken interest.

'As you do not mention your own health, or that of Lady Gomm, I infer with pleasure that the climate agrees with you both. That this may continue to be so, is my earnest and sincere wish, in which Mrs. Wordsworth cordially unites.

'Believe me, dear Sir William,

'Faithfully yours,

'WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.'

In the following year, 20th Jan. 1847, Mr. William Wordsworth, the younger son[1] of Mr. Wordsworth, and his successor in the office of distributor, was married at the parish church of Brighton, Sussex, by the Rev. H. M. Wagner, vicar, to Fanny Eliza Graham, youngest daughter of Reginald Graham, Esq. of Brighton, born at Kirklinton, in the county of Cumberland.

The following spring and summer was a season of severe affliction to the household at Rydal. As has been already mentioned,[2] the Poet's daughter, Mrs. Quillinan, had accompanied her husband on a voyage to Portugal, for the sake of change of air, and with the hope of recovering her health.

The result of this experiment appeared at first to be very favourable. Her powers of exertion were greatly increased, and her friends rejoiced in the hope of seeing her restored to her former health. But alas! the expectation was very short-lived.

[1] He was born at Allan Bank, May 12, 1810; sent to the Charter House in Jan. 1820;* removed in consequence of ill health in May, 1822. He remained under his father's roof in a delicate state of health till 1829, when he went to Bremen, and in the summer of 1830 became a student at Heidelberg, where he remained till the spring of 1831, when he was recalled to England, in consequence of an extension of the district of the Distributorship; and he resided at Carlisle as Mr. Wordsworth's deputy there. In June, 1842, Mr. Wordsworth resigned the Distributorship, and his son William was appointed in his place. See above, p. 393.

[2] Above, p. 384, 385.

* [The reader, who is familiar with Charles Lamb's letters, will readily recall one of the most delightful and characteristic in the collection, written in November, 1819, on the occasion of a visit paid by 'William Minor' to Lamb and his sister in London.—Talfourd's 'Letters of Charles Lamb,' Chap. XI. Vol. II. p. 59.—H. R.]

Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth, when staying at Westminster in April of this year, received intelligence with respect to their daughter's health which made them break short their visit, and hasten homeward on the 26th April.

More than two months passed away. They were months of sadness and sorrow to them. But she who was the object of their care was cheerful. She knew that her end was near, and she looked steadily and calmly at it. None of her natural courage and buoyancy failed her, and it was invigorated and elevated by faith. She gradually declined, and at length her spirit departed, and she fell asleep in peace.

The event was thus announced to a relative by Mr. Wordsworth's pen:

[*Received, July* 10, 1847.]

'My dear C——,

'Last night (I ought to have said a quarter before one this morning), it pleased God to take to Himself the spirit of our beloved daughter, and your truly affectionate cousin. She had latterly much bodily suffering, under which she supported herself by prayer, and gratitude to her heavenly Father, for granting her to the last so many of His blessings.

'I need not write more. Your aunt bears up under this affliction as becomes a Christian.

'Kindest love to Susan, of whose sympathy we are fully assured.

'Your affectionate uncle, and the more so for this affliction,

'Wm. Wordsworth.

'Pray for us!'

She lies buried in Grasmere churchyard, with the following inscription on her grave:

'Dora Quillinan,

9th day of July, 1847.

"Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."—*St. John*, vi. 37.'

Mr. Wordsworth thus writes to Mr. Moxon, Aug. 9, 1847:

'We bear up under our affliction as well as God enables us to do. But oh! my dear friend, our loss is immeasurable. God bless you and yours.'

And again, 29th Dec. 1847:

'Our sorrow, I feel, is for life; but God's will be done!'

Again, he thus writes to Mr Peace:

'*Brigham*, [*Postmark*, "*Cockermouth*, *Nov.* 18, 1848."]

'My dear Friend,

'Mrs. Wordsworth has deputed to me the acceptable office of answering your friendly letter, which has followed us to Brigham, upon the banks of the river Derwent, near Cockermouth, the birthplace of four brothers and their sister. Of these four, I, the second, am now the only one left. Am I wrong in supposing that you have been here? The house was driven out of its place by a railway, and stands now nothing like so advantageously for a prospect of this beautiful country, though at only a small distance from its former situation.

'We are expecting Mr. Cuthbert Southey to-day from his curacy, seven or eight miles distant. He is busy in carrying through the press the first volume of his father's letters, or rather, collecting and preparing them for it.

Do you happen to have any in your possession? If so, be so kind as to let me or his son know what they are, if you think they contain anything which would interest the public.

. . . . . .

'Mrs. W. and I are, thank God, both in good health, and possessing a degree of strength beyond what is usual at our age, being both in our seventy-ninth year. The beloved daughter whom it has pleased God to remove from this anxious and sorrowful world, I have not mentioned; but I can judge of the depth of your fellow-feeling for us. Many thanks to you for referring to the text in Scripture which I quoted to you so long ago.[1] "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done." He who does not find support and consolation there, will find it nowhere. God grant that it may be continued to me and mine, and to all sufferers! Believe me, with Mrs. W.'s very kind remembrance,

'Faithfully yours,

'WM. WORDSWORTH.

. . . . . .

'When you see Mr. Cottle, pray remember us most affectionately to him, with respectful regards to his sister.'

[1] [Note by Mr. Peace.] At Rydal Mount in 1838. Ephesians, v. 20. 'My favourite Text,' said he.

CHAPTER LXII.

REMINISCENCES.

Before we enter on the closing scene of these Memoirs, let us pause a little, and revert to an earlier period in the narrative.

I have been favoured[1] with some Reminiscences of Mr. Wordsworth's intercourse with his neighbours at Rydal, and they appear to furnish material for an interesting chapter in his history, and to afford an agreeable illustration of his character in his daily habits, and to show that the spirit of his poetry was embodied in the life of the Poet.

I will, therefore, make some selections from these records.

'*Lancrigg, Easedale,*[2] *Aug.* 26, 1841.

'Wordsworth made some striking remarks on Goëthe in a walk on the terrace yesterday. He thinks that the German poet is greatly overrated, both in this country and his own. He said, "He does not seem to me to be a great poet in either of the classes of poets. At the head of the first class I would place Homer and Shakspeare, whose universal minds are able to reach every variety of thought and feeling without bringing their own individuality before

[1] By Lady Richardson; Mrs. Davy, of the Oaks, Ambleside; Rev. R. P. Graves, of the Parsonage, Windermere.

[2] Mrs. Fletcher's.

the reader. They infuse, they breathe life into every object they approach, but you never find *themselves*. At the head of the second class, those whom you can trace individually in all they write, I would place Spenser and Milton. In all that Spenser writes you can trace the gentle affectionate spirit of the man; in all that Milton writes you find the exalted sustained being that he was. Now in what Goëthe writes, who aims to be of the first class, the *universal*, you find the man himself, the artificial man, where he should not be found; so that I consider him a very artificial writer, aiming to be universal, and yet constantly exposing his individuality, which his character was not of a kind to dignify. He had not sufficiently clear moral perceptions to make him anything but an artificial writer."

'Tuesday, the 2d of May, Wordsworth and Miss F. came early to walk about and dine. He was in a very happy, kindly mood. We took a walk on the terrace, and he went as usual to his favourite points. On our return he was struck with the berries on the holly tree, and said, "Why should not you and I go and pull some berries from the other side of the tree, which is not seen from the window? and then we can go and plant them in the rocky ground behind the house." We pulled the berries, and set forth with our tool. I made the holes, and the Poet put in the berries. He was as earnest and eager about it, as if it had been a matter of importance; and as he put the seeds in, he every now and then muttered, in his low solemn tone, that beautiful verse from Burns's Vision:

> "And wear thou this, she solemn said,
> And bound the holly round my head.
> The polished leaves and berries red
> Did rustling play;
> And like a passing thought she fled
> In light away."

He clambered to the highest rocks in the "Tom Intach," and put in the berries in such situations as Nature sometimes does with such true and beautiful effect. He said, "I like to do this for posterity. Some people are selfish enough to say, What has posterity done for me? but the past does much for us."

'*November*, 1843.—Wordsworth holds the critical power very low, infinitely lower than the inventive; and he said to-day that if the quantity of time consumed in writing critiques on the works of others, were given to original composition, of whatever kind it might be, it would be much better employed; it would make a man find out sooner his own level, and it would do infinitely less mischief. A false or malicious criticism may do much injury to the minds of others; a stupid invention, either in prose or verse, is quite harmless.

'*December* 22d, 1843.—The shortest day is past, and it was a very pleasant one to us, for Wordsworth and Miss Fenwick offered to spend it with us. They came early, and, although it was misty and dingy, he proposed to walk up Easedale. We went by the terrace, and through the little gate on the fell, round by Brimmer Head, having diverged a little up from Easedale, nearly as far as the ruined cottage. He said, when he and his sister wandered there so much, that cottage was inhabited by a man of the name of Benson, a waller, its last inhabitant. He said on the terrace, "This is a striking anniversary to me; for this day forty-four years ago, my sister and I took up our abode at Grasmere, and three days after, we found out this walk, which long remained our favourite haunt." There is always something very touching in his way of speaking of his sister; the tones of his voice become more gentle and solemn, and he ceases to have that flow of expression which is so remarkable in him on all other

subjects. It is as if the sadness connected with her present condition, was too much for him to dwell upon in connection with the past, although habit and the "omnipotence of circumstance," have made its daily presence less oppressive to his spirits. He said that his sister spoke constantly of their early days, but more of the years they spent together in other parts of England, than those at Grasmere. As we proceeded on our walk, he happened to speak of the frequent unhappiness of married persons, and the low and wretched principles on which the greater number of marriages were formed. He said that unless there was a strong foundation of love and respect, the "unavoidable breaks and cataracts" of domestic life must soon end in mutual aversion, for that married life ought not to be in theory, and assuredly it never was in practice, a system of mere submission on either side, but it should be a system of mutual co-operation for the good of each. If the wife is always expected to conceal her difference of opinion from her husband, she ceases to be an equal, and the man loses the advantage which the marriage tie is intended to provide for him in a civilized and Christian country. He then went on to say, that, although he never saw an amiable single woman, without wishing that she were married, from his strong feeling of the happiness of a well assorted marriage, yet he was far from thinking that marriage always improved people. It certainly did not, unless it was a congenial marriage. During tea, he talked with great animation of the unfortunate separation of feeling between the rich and the poor in this country. The reason of this he thinks is our greater freedom; that the line of demarcation not being so clearly laid down in this country by the law as in others, people fancy they must make it for themselves. He considers Christian education the only cure for this state of things. He spoke of his own desire

to carry out the feeling of brotherhood, with regard to servants, which he had always endeavoured to do.'

'*The Oaks, Ambleside, Monday, Jan.* 22, 1844.

'While[1] Mrs. Quillinan was sitting with us to-day, Henry Fletcher ran in to say that he had received his summons for Oxford, (he had been in suspense about rooms, as an exhibitioner at Baliol), and must be off within an hour. His young cousins and I went down with him, to wait for the mail in the market-place. We found Mr. Wordsworth walking about before the post-office door, in very charming mood. His spirits were excited by the bright morning sunshine, and he entered at once on a full flow of discourse. He looked very benevolently on Henry as he mounted on the top of the coach, and seemed quite disposed to give an old man's blessing to the young man entering on an untried field, and then (nowise interrupted by the hurrying to and fro of ostlers with their smoking horses, or passengers with their carpet bags) he launched into a dissertation, in which there was, I thought, a remarkable union of his powerful diction, and his practical, thoughtful good sense, on the subject of college habits, and of his utter distrust of all attempts to nurse virtue by an avoidance of temptation. He expressed also his entire want of confidence (from experience he said) of highly-wrought religious expression in youth. The safest training for the mind in religion he considered to be a contemplating of the character and personal history of Christ. "Work it," he said, "into your thoughts, into your imagination, make it a real presence in the mind." I was rejoiced to hear this plain, loving confession of a Christian faith from Wordsworth. I never heard one more

[1] From Mrs. Davy's notes.

earnest, more as if it came out of a devoutly believing heart.

. . . . . .

'The Oaks, March 5, 1844.

'On our way to Lancrigg to-day, we called at Foxhow. We met Mr. Wordsworth there, and asked him to go with us. It was a beautiful day, one of his very own "mild days" of this month. He kindly consented, and walked with us to meet the carriage at Pelter Bridge. On our drive, he mentioned, with marked pleasure, a dedication written by Mr. Keble, and sent to him for his approval, and for his permission to have it prefixed to Mr. Keble's new volumes of Latin Lectures on Poetry, delivered at Oxford. Mr. Wordsworth said that he had never seen any estimate of his poetical powers, or more especially of his aims in poetry, that appeared to him so discriminating and so satisfactory. He considers praise a perilous and a difficult thing. On this subject he often quotes his lamented friend, Sir George Beaumont, whom, in his intercourse with men of genius, literary aspirants, he describes as admirable in the modesty which he inculcated and practised on this head.

'The Oaks, Ambleside, July 11, 1844.

'Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth at dinner, along with our family party. Mr. and Mrs. Price (from Rugby), two aunts of Mrs. P.'s, and her brother, Mr. Rose a young clergyman (a devout admirer of Wordsworth), joined us at tea. A circle was made as large as our little parlour could hold. Mr. Price sat next to Mr. Wordsworth, and, by design or fortunate accident, introduced some remark on the powers and the discourse of Coleridge. Mr. Wordsworth entered heartily and largely on the subject.

He said that the liveliest and truest image he could give of Coleridge's talk was, "that of a majestic river, the sound or sight of whose course you caught at intervals, which was sometimes concealed by forests, sometimes lost in sand, then came flashing out broad and distinct, then again took a turn which your eye could not follow, yet you knew and felt that it was the same river: so," he said, "there was always a train, a stream, in Coleridge's discourse, always a connection between its parts in his own mind, though one not always perceptible to the minds of others. Mr. Wordsworth went on to say, that in his opinion Coleridge had been spoilt as a poet by going to Germany. The bent of his mind, which was at all times very much to metaphysical theology, had there been fixed in that direction. "If it had not been so," said Wordsworth, "he would have been the greatest, the most abiding poet of his age. His very faults would have made him popular (meaning his sententiousness and laboured strain), while he had enough of the essentials of a poet to make him deservedly popular in a higher sense.

. . . . . .

'Mr. Price soon after mentioned a statement of Coleridge's respecting himself, recorded in his "Table Talk," namely, that a visit to the battle-field of Marathon would raise in him no kindling emotion, and asked Mr. Wordsworth whether this was true as a token of his mind. At first Mr. Wordsworth said, "Oh! that was a mere bravado for the sake of astonishing his hearers!" but then, correcting himself, he added, "And yet it might in some sense be true, for Coleridge was not under the influence of external objects. He had extraordinary powers of summoning up an image or series of images in his own mind, and he might mean that his idea of Marathon was so vivid, that no visible observation could make it more so." "A

remarkable instance of this," added Mr. Wordsworth, "is his poem, said to be "composed in the Vale of Chamouni." Now he never was at Chamouni, or near it, in his life. Mr. Wordsworth next gave a somewhat humorous account of the rise and progress of the "Ancient Marinere." "It arose," he said, "out of the want of five pounds which Coleridge and I needed to make a tour together in Devonshire. We agreed to write jointly a poem, the subject of which Coleridge took from a dream which a friend of his had once dreamt concerning a person suffering under a dire curse from the commission of some crime." "I," said Wordsworth, "supplied the crime, the shooting of the albatross, from an incident I had met with in one of Shelvocke's voyages. We tried the poem conjointly for a day or two, but we pulled different ways, and only a few lines of it are mine." From Coleridge, the discourse then turned to Scotland. Mr. Wordsworth, in his best manner, with earnest thoughts given out in noble diction, gave his reasons for thinking that, as a poet, Scott would not live. "I don't like," he said, "to say all this, or to take to pieces some of the best reputed passages of Scott's verse, especially in presence of my wife, because she thinks me too fastidious; but as a poet Scott *cannot* live, for he has never in verse written anything addressed to the immortal part of man. In making amusing stories in verse, he will be superseded by some newer versifier; what he writes in the way of natural description is merely rhyming nonsense." As a prose writer, Mr. Wordsworth admitted that Scott had touched a higher vein, because there he had really dealt with feeling and passion. As historical novels, professing to give the manners of a past time, he did not attach much value to those works of Scott's so called, because that he held to be an attempt in which success was

impossible. This led to some remarks on historical writing, from which it appeared that Mr. Wordsworth has small value for anything but contemporary history. He laments that Dr. Arnold should have spent so much of his time and powers in gathering up and putting into imaginary shape the scattered fragments of the history of Rome.[1]

'These scraps of Wordsworth's large, thoughtful, earnest discourse, seem very meagre as I note them down, and in themselves perhaps hardly worth preserving; and yet this is an evening which those who spent it in his company will long remember. His venerable head; his simple, natural, and graceful attitude in his arm-chair; his respectful attention to the slightest remarks or suggestions of others in relation to what was spoken of; his kindly benevolence of expression as he looked round now and then on the circle in our little parlour, all bent to "devour up his discourse," filled up and enlarged the meaning which I fear is but ill conveyed in the words as they are now set down.'

Mr. Wordsworth's Birth-day.[2]

'On Tuesday, April the 7th, 1844, my mother[3] and I left Lancrigg to begin our Yorkshire journey. We arrived at Rydal Mount about three o'clock, and found the tables all tastefully decorated on the esplanade in front of the house. The Poet was standing looking at them with a very pleased expression of face; he received us very kindly, and very soon the children began to arrive. The

[1] But see Memorials of Italy; Sonnets on Roman Historians, vol. iii. p. 164, 165.

[2] Here Lady Richardson's notes are resumed. See above, p. 414.

[3] Mrs. Fletcher.

Grasmere boys and girls came first, and took their places on the benches placed round the gravelled part of the esplanade; their eyes fixed with wonder and admiration on the tables, covered with oranges, gingerbread, and painted eggs, ornamented with daffodils, laurels, and moss, gracefully intermixed. The plot soon began to thicken, and the scene soon became very animated. Neighbours, old and young of all degrees, ascended to the Mount to keep the Poet's seventy-fourth birth-day, and every face looked friendly and happy. Each child brought its own mug, and held it out to be filled with tea, in which ceremony all assisted. Large baskets of currant cakes were handed round and liberally dispensed; and as each detachment of children had satisfied themselves with tea and cake, they were moved off, to play at hide-and-seek among the evergreens on the grassy part of the Mount. The day was not bright, but it was soft, and not cold, and the scene, viewed from the upper windows of the house, was quite beautiful, and one I should have been very sorry not to have witnessed. It was innocent and gay, and perfectly natural. Miss F——, the donor of the fête, looked very happy, and so did all the Poet's household. The children, who amounted altogether to above three hundred, gave three cheers to Mr. Wordsworth and Miss F——. After some singing and dancing, and after the division of eggs, gingerbread, and oranges had taken place, we all began to disperse. We spent the night at the Oaks, and set off on our journey the following morning. The gay scene at the Mount often comes before me, as a pleasant dream. It is perhaps the only part of the island where such a reunion of all classes could have taken place without any connection of landlord and tenant, or any clerical relation, or school direction. Wordsworth, while looking at the gambols on the Mount, expressed his conviction that if such

meetings could oftener take place between people of different condition, a much more friendly feeling would be created than now exists in this country between the rich and poor.

. . . . . .

'*July* 12*th*, 1844.—Wordsworth spoke much during the evening of his early intercourse with Coleridge, on some one observing that it was difficult to carry away a distinct impression from Coleridge's conversation, delightful as every one felt his outpourings to be. Wordsworth agreed, but said he was occasionally very happy in clothing an idea in words; and he mentioned one which was recorded in his sister's journal, during a tour they all made together in Scotland. They passed a steam engine, and Wordsworth made some observation to the effect that it was scarcely possible to divest oneself of the impression on seeing it, that it had life and volition. "Yes," replied Coleridge, "it is a giant with one idea."

. . . . . .

'He discoursed at great length on Scott's works. His poetry he considered of that kind which will always be in demand, and that the supply will always meet it, suited to the age. He does not consider that it in any way goes below the surface of things; it does not reach to any intellectual or spiritual emotion; it is altogether superficial, and he felt it himself to be so. His descriptions are not true to nature; they are addressed to the ear, not to the mind. He was a master of bodily movements in his battle scenes; but very little productive power was exerted in popular creations.'

Duddon Excursion.

'On Friday, the 6th September, 1844, I set off to

breakfast, at Rydal Mount, it being the day fixed by Mr. Wordsworth for our long-projected excursion to the Valley of the Duddon.

. . . . . .

'The rain fell in torrents, and it became doubtful whether we should set off or not; but as it was a thunder shower, we waited till it was over, and then Wordsworth, Mr. Quillinan, Miss Hutchinson, and I, set forth in our carriage to Coniston, where we were to find the Rydal-Mount carriage awaiting us with Mr. Hutchinson. Wordsworth talked very agreeably on the way to Coniston, and repeated several verses of his own, which he seemed pleased that Serjeant Talfourd had repeated to him the day before. He mentioned a singular instance of T. Campbell's inaccuracy of memory, in having actually printed, as his own, a poem of Wordsworth's, "The Complaint:" he repeated it beautifully as we were going up the hill to Coniston. On reaching the inn in the village of Coniston, the rain again fell in torrents. At length, the carriages were ordered to the door, with the intention of our returning home; but just as they were ready, the sun broke out, and we turned the horse's head towards Ulpha Kirk. The right bank of Coniston was all new to me after we passed the village, and Old Man of Coniston. The scenery ceases to be bold and rugged, but is very pleasing, the road passing through hazel copses, the openings showing nice little corn-fields, and comfortable detached farms, with old uncropped trees standing near them; some very fine specimens of old ash trees, which I longed to transport to Easedale, where they have been so cruelly lopped. The opening towards the sea, as we went on, was very pleasing, but the first striking view of the Duddon, was looking down upon it soon after we passed Broughton, where you turn to the right, and very soon after perceive

the peculiar beauty of the valley, although it does not take its wild and dreamlike beauty till you pass Ulpha Kirk. We reversed the order of the sonnets, and saw the river first, "in radiant progress tow'rd the deep," instead of tracing this "child of the clouds," from its cradle in the lofty waste. We reached the Kirk of Ulpha between five and six. The appearance of the little farm-house inn at once made anything approaching to a dinner an impossibility, had we wished it ever so much; but, in due time, we had tea and boiled ham, with two eggs apiece, and were much invigorated by this our first Duddonian meal. The hostess was evidently surprised that we thought of remaining all night, so humbly did she think of the accommodation she had to offer. She remembered Mr. Wordsworth sleeping there fifteen years ago, because it was just after the birth of her daughter, a nice comely girl who attended us at tea. Mr. Quillinan showed great good nature and unselfishness in the arrangements he made, and the care he took of the admirable horse, which I saw him feeding out of a tub, a manger being too great a refinement for Ulpha.

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'After tea, although it was getting dark, we went to the churchyard, which commands a beautiful view towards Seathwaite, and we then walked in that direction, through a lane where the walls were more richly covered by moss and fern, than any I ever saw before. A beautiful dark-coloured tributary to the Duddon comes down from the moors on the left hand, about a mile from Ulpha; and soon after we had passed the small bridge over this stream, Mr. Wordsworth recollected a well which he had discovered thirty or forty years before. We went off the road in search of it, through a shadowy, embowered path; and as it was almost dark, we should probably have failed in

finding it, had we not met a very tiny boy, with a can of water in his hand, who looked at us in speechless amazement, when the Poet said, "Is there a well here, my little lad?" We found the well, and then joined the road again by another path, leaving the child to ponder whether we were creatures of earth or air.

. . . . . .

'Saturday morning was cloudy, but soft, and lovely in its hazy effects. When I went out about seven, I saw Wordsworth going a few steps, and then moving on, and stopping again, in a very abstracted manner; so I kept back. But when he saw me, he advanced, and took me again to the churchyard to see the morning effects, which were very lovely. He said he had not slept well, that the recollection of former days and people had crowded upon him, and, most of "all, my dear sister; and when I thought of her state, and of those who had passed away, Coleridge, and Southey, and many others, while I am left with all my many infirmities, if not sins, in full consciousness, how could I sleep? and then I took to the alteration of sonnets, and that made the matter worse still." Then, suddenly stopping before a little bunch of harebell, which, along with some parsley fern, grew out of the wall near us, he exclaimed, "How perfectly beautiful that is!

> "Would that the little flowers that grow could live,
> Conscious of half the pleasure that they give." *

He then expatiated on the inexhaustible beauty of the arrangements of nature, its power of combining in the most secret recesses, and that it must be for some purpose of beneficence that such operations existed. After breakfast, we got into the cart of the inn, which had a seat

* [Vol. IV. p. 254.]

swung into it, upon which a bolster was put, in honour, I presume, of the Poet Laureate. In this we jogged on to Seathwaite, getting out to ascend a craggy eminence on the right, which Mrs. Wordsworth admired: the view from it is very striking. You see from it all the peculiarities of the vale, the ravine where the Duddon "deserts the haunts of men," "the spots of stationary sunshine," and the homesteads which are scattered here and there, both on the heights and in the lower ground, near protecting rocks and craggy steeps. Seathwaite I had a perfect recollection of; and the way we approached it twenty years ago, from Coniston over Walna Scar, is the way Mr. Wordsworth still recommends as the most beautiful. We went on some distance beyond the chapel, and every new turning and opening among the hills allured us on, till at last the Poet was obliged to exercise the word of command, that we should proceed no further. The return is always a flat thing, so I shall not detail it, except that we reached our respective homes in good time; and I hope I shall never cease to think with gratitude and pleasure of the kindness of my honoured guide through the lovely scenes he has rescued from obscurity, although it happily still remains an unvitiated region, "which stands in no need of the veil of twilight to soften or disguise its features: as it glistens in the morning's sun it fills the spectator's heart with gladsomeness."

'*November* 21.—My mother and I called at Rydal last Saturday, to see the Wordsworths after their autumnal excursion. We found him only at home, looking in great vigour and much the better for this little change of scene and circumstance. He spoke with much interest of a communication he had had from a benevolent surgeon at Manchester, an admirer of his, who thinks that a great proportion of the blindness in this country might be pre-

vented by attention to the diseases of the eye in childhood. He spoke of two very interesting blind ladies he had seen at Leamington, one of whom had been at Rydal Mount a short time before her "total eclipse," and now derived the greatest comfort from the recollection of these beautiful scenes, almost the last she looked on. He spoke of his own pleasure in returning to them, and of the effect of the first view from "Orrest Head," the point mentioned in his "unfortunate[1] sonnet, which has" he said, "you are aware, exposed me to the most unlooked for accusations. They actually accuse me of desiring to interfere with the innocent enjoyments of the poor, by preventing this district becoming accessible to them by railway. Now I deny that it is to that class that this kind of scenery is either the most improving or the most attractive. For the very poor the great God of nature has mercifully spread out his Bible everywhere; the common sunshine, green fields, the blue sky, the shining river, are everywhere to be met with in this country; and it is only an individual here and there among the uneducated classes who feels very deeply the poetry of lakes and mountains; and such persons would rather wander about where they like than rush through the country in a railway. It is not, therefore, the poor, as a class, that would benefit morally or mentally by a railway conveyance; while to the educated classes, to whom such scenes as these give enjoyment of the purest kind, the effect would be almost entirely destroyed."

'*Wednesday, 20th Nov.* — A most remarkable halo was seen round the moon soon after five o'clock to-day; the colours of the rainbow were most brilliant, and the circle was entire for about five minutes.

[1] See above, Vol. I. p. 453.

'Thursday, Mr. Wordsworth dined here with the Balls, Davys, and Mr. Jeffries. Mr. W. spoke with much delight of the moon the day before, and said his servant, whom he called "dear James," called his attention to it.

. . . . . .

'*Wednesday December 18th.* — The Wordsworths and Quillinans sat two hours with us. He said he thought ——— was mistaken in the philosophy of his view of the danger of Milton's Satan being represented without horns and hoofs; that Milton's conception was as true as it was grand; that making sin ugly was a common-place notion compared with making it beautiful outwardly, and inwardly a hell. It assailed every form of ambition and worldliness, the form in which sin attacks the highest natures.*

. . . . . .

'This day, Sunday, the 9th of February, the snow is again falling fast, but very gently. Yesterday, the 8th, was a beautiful day. We had a very pleasant visit of above an hour from Wordsworth and his wife. He was in excellent spirits, and repeated with a solemn beauty, quite peculiar to himself, a sonnet he had lately composed on "Young England;" and his indignant burst "Where then is *old*, our dear old England?" was one of the finest bursts of nature and art combined I have ever heard. My dear mother's face, too, while he was repeating it, was a fine addition to the picture; and I could not help feeling they were both noble specimens of "dear old England." Mrs. Wordsworth, too, is a goodly type of another class of old England, more thoroughly English, perhaps, than either of the others, but they made an admirable trio; and Mrs. Wordsworth's face expressed more admiration

* [See 'The Life and Correspondence' of the late Dr. Arnold, Appendix, c. ix., note. — E. E.]

of her husband in his bardic mood than I ever saw before. He discussed mesmerism very agreeably, stating strongly his detestation of clairvoyance; not only on the presumption of its being altogether false, but supposing it, for argument sake, to be true, then he thinks it would be an engine of enormous evil, putting it in the power of any malicious person to blast the character of another, and shaking to the very foundations the belief in individual responsibility. He is not disposed to reject without examination the assertions with regard to the curative powers of mesmerism. He spoke to-day with pleasure of having heard that Mr. Lockhart had been struck by his lines from a MS. poem, printed in his Railway-Sonnet pamphlet.

. . . . . .

'*February 24th.*—Snow still on the ground. It has never been quite clear of snow since the 27th January. Partial thaws have allowed us to peep out into the world of Ambleside and Rydal; and last Saturday we drank tea at Foxhow, and met the Wordsworths and Miss F——. He is very happy to have his friend home again, and was in a very agreeable mood. He repeated his sonnet on the "Pennsylvanians," and again that on "Young England," which I admire so much.

. . . . . .

'*March 6th.*—Wordsworth, whom we met yesterday at dinner at the Oaks, expressed his dislike to monuments in churches; partly from the absurdity and falsehood of the epitaphs which sometimes belonged to them, and partly from their injuring the architectural beauties of the edifice, as they grievously did in Westminster Abbey and many other cathedrals. He made an exception in favour of those old knightly monuments, which he admitted added to the solemnity of the scene, and were in keeping with the buildings; and he added, "I must also except another

monument which once made a deep impression on my mind. It was in a small church near St. Alban's; and I once left London in the afternoon, so as to sleep at St. Alban's the first night, and have a few hours of evening light to visit this church. It was before the invention of railways, and I determined that I would always do the same; but, the year after, railways existed, and I have never been able to carry out my project again: all wandering is now over. Well, I went to this small country church; and just opposite the door at which you enter, the figure of the great Lord Bacon, in pure white, was the first thing that presented itself. I went there to see his tomb, but I did not expect to see himself; and it impressed me deeply. There he was, a man whose fame extends over the whole civilized world, sitting calmly, age after age, in white robes of pure alabaster, in this small country church, seldom visited except by some stray traveller, and he having desired to be interred in this spot, to lie near his mother."

'On referring to Mallet's Life of Bacon, I see he mentions that he was privately buried at St. Michael's church, near St. Alban's; and it adds, "The spot that contains his remains, lay obscure and undistinguished, till the gratitude of a private man, formerly his servant" (Sir Thomas Meautys), "erected a monument to his name and memory." This makes it probable that the likeness is a correct one.

'*November 8th*, 1845.—On our way to take an early dinner at Foxhow yesterday, we met the Poet at the foot of his own hill, and he engaged us to go to tea to the Mount, on our way home, to hear their adventures, he and his Mary having just returned from a six weeks' wander among their friends. During their absence, we always feel that the road between Grasmere and Ambleside is wanting in something, beautiful as it is. We reached the

Mount before six, and found dear Mrs. Wordsworth much restored by her tour. She has enjoyed the visit to her kith and kin in Herefordshire extremely, and we had a nice comfortable chat round the fire and the tea-table. After tea, in speaking of the misfortune it was when a young man did not seem more inclined to one profession than another, Wordsworth said that he had always some feeling of indulgence for men at that age, who felt such a difficulty. He had himself passed through it, and had incurred the strictures of his friends and relations on this subject. He said that after he had finished his college course, he was in great doubt as to what his future employment should be. He did not feel himself good enough for the Church, he felt that his mind was not properly disciplined for that holy office, and that the struggle between his conscience and his impulses, would have made life a torture. He also shrank from the law, although Southey often told him that he was well fitted for the higher parts of the profession. He had studied military history with great interest, and the strategy of war; and he always fancied that he had talents for command; and he at one time thought of a military life, but then he was without connections, and he felt if he were ordered to the West Indies, his talents would not save him from the yellow fever, and he gave that up. At this time he had only a hundred a year. Upon this he lived, and travelled, and married, for it was not until the late Lord Lonsdale came into possession, that the money which was due to them was restored. He mentioned this to show how difficult it often was to judge of what was passing in a young man's mind, but he thought that for the generality of men, it was much better that they should be early led to the exercise of a profession of their own choice.

'*December*, 1845.—Henry Fletcher and I dined at the

Mount, on the 21st of this month. The party consisted of Mr. Crabb Robinson (their Christmas guest), Mrs. Arnold, Miss Martineau, and ourselves. My mother's cold was too bad to allow her to go, which I regretted, as it was, like all their little meetings, most sociable and agreeable. Wordsworth was much pleased with a little notice of his new edition in the "Examiner;" he thought it very well done. He expressed himself very sweetly at dinner, on the pleasant terms of neighbourly kindness we enjoyed in the valleys. It will be pleasant in after times to remember his words, and still more his manner, when he said this, it was done with such perfect simplicity and equality of feeling, without the slightest reference to self, and I am sure, without thinking of himself at the time, as more than one of the little circle whose friendly feeling he was commending.

. . . . . .

'*October*, 1846.—Wordsworth dined with us one day last week, and was in much greater vigour than I have seen him all this summer.

. . . . . .

'He mentioned incidentally that the spelling of our language was very much fixed in the time of Charles the Second, and that the attempts which had been made since, and are being made in the present day, were not likely to succeed. He entered his protest as usual against ——'s style, and said that since Johnson, no writer had done so much to vitiate the English language. He considers Lord Chesterfield the last good English writer before Johnson. Then came the Scotch historians, who did infinite mischief to style, with the exception of Smollet, who wrote good pure English. He quite agreed to the saying, that all great poets wrote good prose; he said there was not one exception. He does not think Burns's prose equal to his verse,

but this he attributes to his writing his letters in English words, while in his verse he was not trammelled in this way, but let his numbers have their own way.

'*Lancrigg, November.* — Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth took an early dinner with us on the 26th of this month. He was very vigorous, and spoke of his majority at Glasgow, also of his reception at Oxford. He told us of an application he had just had from a Glasgow publisher that he should write a sonnet in praise of Fergusson and Allan Ramsay, to prefix to a new edition of those Poets which was about to appear. He intended to reply, that Burns's lines to Fergusson would be a much more appropriate tribute than anything he could write; and he went on to say that Burns owed much to Fergusson, and that he had taken the plan of many of his poems from Fergusson, and the measure also. He did not think this at all detracted from the merit of Burns, for he considered it a much higher effort of genius to excel in degree, than to strike out what may be called an original poem. He spoke highly of the purity of language of the Scotch poets of an earlier period, Gavin Douglass, and others, and said that they greatly excelled the English poets, after Chaucer, which he attributed to the distractions of England during the wars of York and Lancaster.

'*December 25th*, 1846. — My mother and I called at Rydal Mount yesterday early, to wish our dear friends the blessings of the season. Mrs. W. met us at the door most kindly, and we found him before his good fire in the dining-room, with a flock of robins feasting at the window. He had an old tattered book in his hand; and as soon as he had given us a cordial greeting, he said, in a most animated manner, "I must read to you what Mary and I have this moment finished. It is a passage in the Life of Thomas Elwood." He then read to us the following extract:

'"Some little time before I went to Aylesbury prison, I was desired by my quondam master, Milton, to take an house for him in the neighbourhood where I dwell, that he might get out of the city, for the safety of himself and his family, the pestilence then growing hot in London. I took a pretty box for him in Giles-Chalford, a mile from me, of which I gave him notice; and intended to have waited on him, and seen him well settled in it, but was prevented by that imprisonment.

'"But now being released, and returned home, I soon made a visit to him, to welcome him into the country.

'"After some common discourses had passed between us, he called for a manuscript of his, which being brought, he delivered to me, bidding me take it home with me and read it at my leisure; and when I had so done, return it to him with my judgment thereupon.

'"When I came home, and had set myself to read it, I found it was that excellent poem which he entituled *Paradise Lost.* After I had with the best attention read it through, I made him another visit, and returned him his book with due acknowledgment of the favour he had done me in communicating it to me. He asked me how I liked it, and what I thought of it, which I modestly, but freely told him; and after some further discourse about it, I pleasantly said to him, 'Thou hast said much here of Paradise lost, but what hast thou to say of Paradise found?' He made me no answer, but sate some time in a muse; then brake off that discourse, and fell upon another subject. After the sickness was over, and the city well cleansed and become safely habitable again, he returned thither; and when afterwards I went to wait on him there (which I seldom failed of doing whenever my occasions drew me to London), he showed me his second poem, called 'Paradise Regained;' and in a pleasant tone said

to me, 'This is owing to you, for you put it into my head by the question you put to me at Chalford, which before I had not thought of.' *But from this digression I return to the family I then lived in.*"

'Wordsworth was highly diverted with the *apology* of the worthy Quaker, for *the digression*, which has alone saved him from oblivion. He offered to send us the old book, which came a few days after; and I shall add another digression in favour of John Milton, to whom he appears to have been introduced about the year 1661, by a Dr. Paget. It is thus notified *apropos* to Thomas Elwood, feeling a desire for more learning than he possessed, which having expressed to Isaac Pennington, with whom he himself lived as tutor to his children, he says, "Isaac Pennington had an intimate acquaintance with Dr. Paget, a physician of note in London, and he with John Milton, a gentleman of great note for learning throughout the learned world, for the accurate pieces he had written on various subjects and occasions. This person having filled a public station in the former times, lived now a private and retired life in London, and, having wholly lost his sight, kept always a man to read to him, which usually was the son of some gentleman of his acquaintance, whom in kindness he took to improve in his learning.

'"He received me courteously, as well for the sake of Dr. Paget, who introduced me, as of Isaac Pennington, who recommended me, to both whom he bore a good respect; and having inquired divers things of me, with respect to my former progression in learning, he dismissed me to provide myself of such accommodations as might be most suitable to my future studies.

'"I went, therefore, and took myself a lodging as near to his house, which was then in Jewin street, as conveniently I could, and from thenceforward went every day in

the afternoon (except on the first days of the week), and sitting by him in his dining-room, read to him in such books in the Latin tongue as he pleased to hear me read."'

'*The Oaks, Ambleside, Jan.* 15, 1845.

'We[1] dined to-day at Rydal Mount. Mr. Wordsworth, during dinner, grave and silent, till, on some remark having been made on the present condition of the Church, he most unreservedly gave his own views; and gave expression, as I have only once heard him give before, to his own earnest, devout, humble feelings as a Christian. In the evening, being led by some previous conversation to speak of St. Paul, he said, "Oh, what a character that is! how well we know him! How human, yet how noble! How little outward sufferings moved him! It is not in speaking of these that he calls himself wretched; it is when he speaks of the inward conflict. Paul and David," he said, "may be called the two Shaksperian characters in the Bible; both types, as it were, of human nature in its strength and its weakness. Moses is grand, but then it is chiefly from position, from the office he had entrusted to him. We do not know Moses as a man, as a brother-man."

'*April* 7, 1846. — I went to the Mount to-day, to pay my respects to Mr. Wordsworth, on his birth-day. I found him and dear Mrs. Wordsworth very happy, in the arrival of their four grandsons. The two elder are to go to Rossall next week. Some talk concerning schools led Mr. Wordsworth into a discourse, which, in relation to himself, I thought very interesting, on the dangers of emulation, as used in the way of help to school progress. Mr. Words-

[1] Communicated by Mrs. Davy.

worth thinks that envy is too likely to go along with this, and therefore would hold it to be unsafe. "In my own case," he said, "I never felt emulation with another man but once, and that was accompanied by envy. It is a horrid feeling." This "once" was in the study of Italian, which, he continued, "I entered on at college along with ——" (I forget the name he mentioned). "I never engaged in the proper studies of the university, so that in these I had no temptation to envy any one; but I remember with pain that I *had* envious feelings when my fellow-student in Italian got before me. I was his superior in many departments of mind, but he was the better Italian scholar, and I envied him. The annoyance this gave me made me feel that emulation was dangerous for *me*, and it made me very thankful that as a boy I never experienced it. I felt very early the force of the words, 'Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect,' and as a teacher, or friend, or counsellor of youth, I would hold forth no other motive to exertion than this. There is, I think, none other held forth in the gospels. No permission is given to emulation there. . . . .
There must always be a danger of incurring the passion of vanity by emulation. If we try to outstrip a fellow-creature, and succeed, we may naturally enough be proud. The true lesson of humility is to strive after conformity to that excellence which we never can surpass, never even by a great distance attain to." There was, in the whole manner as well as matter of Mr. Wordsworth's discourse on this subject, a deep veneration for the will of God concerning us, which I shall long remember with interest and delight — I hope with profit. "Oh! one other time," he added, smiling, "one other time in my life I felt envy. It was when my brother was nearly certain of success in a

foot-race with me. I tripped up his heels. This *must* have been envy."

. . . . . .

'*Lesketh How, Jan.* 11, 1847.

'In a morning visit by our fireside to-day, from Mr. Wordsworth, something led to the mention of Milton, whose poetry, he said, was earlier a favourite with him than that of Shakspeare. Speaking of Milton's not allowing his daughters to learn the meaning of the Greek they read to him, or at least not exerting himself to teach it to them, he admitted that this seemed to betoken a low estimate of the condition and purposes of the female mind. "And yet, where could he have picked up such notions," said Mr. W., "in a country which had seen so many women of learning and talent? But his opinion of what women ought to be, it may be presumed, is given in the unfallen Eve, as contrasted with the right condition of man before his Maker:

'He for God only, she for God in him.'

Now that," said Mr. Wordsworth, earnestly, "*is* a low, a very low and a very false estimate of woman's condition." He was amused on my showing him the (almost) contemporary notice of Milton by Wycherly, and, after reading it, spoke a good deal of the obscurity of men of genius in or near their own times. "But the most singular thing," he continued, "is, that in all the writings of Bacon there is not one allusion to Shakspeare."

'*Lesketh How, Jan.* 10, 1849.

'A long fireside visit from Mr. Wordsworth this morning, in highly sociable spirits; speaking much of old days and old acquaintances. He spoke with much regret of

Scott's careless views about money, and said that he had often spoken to him of the duty of economy, as a means to insure literary independence. Scott's reply always was, "Oh, I can make as much as I please by writing." "This," said Mr. W., "was marvellous to me, who had never written a line with a view to profit. Speaking of his own prose writing, he said, that but for Coleridge's irregularity of purpose he should probably have left much more in that kind behind him. When Coleridge was proposing to publish his "Friend," he (Mr. Wordsworth) offered contributions. Coleridge expressed himself pleased with the offer, but said, "I must arrange my principles for the work, and when that is done I shall be glad of your aid." But this "arrangement of principles" never took place. Mr. Wordsworth added, "I think my nephew, Dr. Wordsworth,[1] will, after my death, collect and publish all I have written in prose."

'On this day, as I have heard him more than once before, Mr. Wordsworth, in a way very earnest, and to me very impressive and remarkable, disclaimed all value for, all concern about, posthumous fame."

[1] On another occasion, I believe, he intimated a desire that his works in prose should be edited by his son-in-law, Mr. Quillinan.

[A place may be found here for Mrs. Hemans's impressions of Wordsworth's character and daily life, written several years earlier (in 1830) at the time of her visit to Rydal Mount, and published, after her death in the Memoir by her sister, and in Chorley's 'Memorials of Mrs. Hemans':

. . . . 'There is an almost patriarchal simplicity, an absence of all pretension, about him [Mr. Wordsworth]; all is free, unstudied — "the river gliding at his own sweet will"; in his manner and conversation there is more of impulse about them than I had expected, but in other respects I see much that I should have looked for in the poet of meditative life: frequently his head

droops, his eyes half close, and he seems buried in quiet depths of thought. I have passed a delightful morning to-day (June 22) in walking with him about his own richly shaded grounds, and hearing him speak of the old English writers, particularly Spenser, whom he loves, as he himself expresses it, for his "earnestness and devotedness." . . . . He admired our exploit in crossing the Ulverston Sands; the lake scenery, he says, is never seen to such advantage as after the passage of what he calls its majestic barrier.

. . . . 'I am charmed with Mr. Wordsworth; his manners are distinguished by that frank simplicity, which I believe to be ever the characteristic of *real* genius; his conversation perfectly free and unaffected, yet remarkable for power of expression and vivid imagery; when the subject calls for anything like enthusiasm, the poet breaks out frequently and delightfully, and his gentle and affectionate playfulness in the intercourse with all the members of his family would, of itself, sufficiently refute Moore's theory in the Life of Byron, with regard to the unfitness of genius for domestic happiness. . . . . "There is a daily beauty in his life," which is in such lovely harmony with his poetry, that I am thankful to have witnessed and *felt* it. He gives me a good deal of his society, reads to me, walks with me, leads my pony when I ride, and I begin to talk with him as with a sort of *paternal* friend. The whole of this morning (June 24) he kindly passed in reading to me a great deal from Spenser, and afterwards his own "Laodamia," my favourite "Tintern Abbey," and many of those noble sonnets I enjoy so much. His reading is very peculiar, but, to my ear, delightful; slow, solemn, *earnest* in expression more than any I have ever heard; when he reads or recites in the open air, his deep tones seem to proceed from a spirit-voice, and belong to the religion of the place; they harmonize so fitly with the thrilling tones of woods and waterfalls. His expressions are often strikingly poetical: "I would not give up the mists that *spiritualize* our mountains for all the blue skies of Italy." Yesterday evening he walked beside me, as I rode on a long and lovely mountain-path high above Grasmere lake: I was much interested by his showing me, carved deep into the rock, as we passed, the initials of his wife's name inscribed there many years ago by himself; and the dear old man, like "Old Mortality," renews them from time to time.

. . . . 'It is delightful to see a life in such perfect harmony with all that his writings express — "true to the kindred points of heaven and home." You may remember how much I disliked that shallow theory of Mr. Moore's with regard to the unfitness of genius for domestic happiness. I was speaking of it yesterday to Mr. Wordsworth, and was pleased by his remark: "It is not because they possess genius that they make unhappy homes, but because they do not possess genius enough; a higher order of mind would enable them to see and feel all the beauty of domestic ties." His mind, indeed, may well inhabit an untroubled atmosphere, for, as he himself declares, no wounded affections, no embittered feelings, have ever been his lot; the current of his domestic life has flowed on, bright, and pure, and unbroken.

. . . . 'Mr. Wordsworth's kindness has inspired me with a feeling of confidence, which it is delightful to associate with those of admiration and respect, before excited by his writings; — and he has treated me with so much consideration, and gentleness, and care! — they have been like balm to my spirit. . . . . I wish I had time to tell you of mornings which he has passed in reading to me, and of evenings when he has walked beside me, whilst I rode through the lovely vales of Grasmere and Rydal; and of his beautiful, sometimes half-unconscious recitation in a voice so deep and solemn, that it has often brought tears into my eyes. His voice has something quite breeze-like in the soft gradations of its swells and falls. . . . . We had been listening during one of these evening rides, to various sounds and notes of birds, which broke upon the stillness; and at last I said, "Perhaps there may be still deeper and richer music pervading all nature than we are permitted, in this state, to hear." He answered by reciting those glorious lines of Milton's:

> "Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,
> Unseen, both when we walk and when we sleep," etc.

and this in tones that seemed rising from such depths of veneration! His tones of solemn earnestness, sinking, almost dying away into a murmur of veneration, as if the passage were breathed forth from the heart, I shall never forget.' — H. R.]

CHAPTER LXIII.

REMINISCENCES: MISCELLANEOUS MEMORANDA.

I SHALL not endeavour to give an idea of Mr. Wordsworth's conversation. Such an attempt would be futile. No powers of description can adequately represent the effect produced by the aspect, especially in his latter days — the broad full forehead, the silver hair, the deep and varied intonations of the voice, and the copious river-like flow of words, sweeping along with a profusion of imagery, reflections, and incidents, in a majestic tide.

To sit down to represent this would be an act of presumption, like that attributed to the oriental monarch who, in a fit of splenetic revenge, cut up the magnificent river into a number of petty rivulets. I shall content myself with noting down some records of opinions which he expressed from time to time on literary subjects in my hearing, — some of them nearly a quarter of a century ago.

'Remember, first read the ancient classical authors; *then* come to *us;* and you will be able to judge for yourself which of us is worth reading.

'The first book of Homer appears to be independent of the rest. The plan of the Odyssey is more methodical than that of the Iliad. The character of Achilles seems to me one of the grandest ever conceived. There

is something awful in it, particularly in the circumstance of his acting under an abiding foresight of his own death. One day, conversing with Payne Knight and Uvedale Price concerning Homer, I expressed my admiration of Nestor's speech, as eminently natural, where he tells the Greek leaders that *they* are mere children in comparison with the heroes of *old* whom *he* had known.[1] "But," said Knight and Price, "that passage is spurious!" However, I will not part with it. It is interesting to compare the same characters (Ajax, for instance) as treated by Homer, and then afterwards by the Greek dramatists, and to mark the difference of handling. In the plays of Euripides, politics come in as a disturbing force: Homer's characters act on physical impulse. There is more *introversion* in the dramatists: whence Aristotle rightly calls him τραγικώτατος. The tower-scene, where Helen comes into the presence of Priam and the old Trojans, displays one of the most beautiful pictures anywhere to be seen. Priam's speech[2] on that occasion is a striking proof of the courtesy and delicacy of the Homeric age, or at least, of Homer himself.

'Catullus translated literally from the Greek; succeeding Roman writers did not so, because Greek had then become the fashionable, universal language. They did not translate, but they paraphrased; the ideas remaining the same, their dress different. Hence the attention of the poets of the Augustan age was principally confined to the happy selection of the most appropriate words and elaborate phrases; and hence arises the difficulty of translating them.

'The characteristics ascribed by Horace to Pindar in his ode, "Pindarum quisquis," &c. are not found in his

[1] Iliad, i. 260. [2] Iliad, iii. 156.

extant writings. Horace had many lyrical effusions of the Theban bard which we have not. How graceful is Horace's modesty in his "Ego *apis* Matinæ More modoque," as contrasted with the Dircæan Swan! Horace is my great favourite: I love him dearly.

'I admire Virgil's high moral tone: for instance, that sublime "Aude, hospes, contemnere opes," &c. and "his dantem jura Catonem!" What courage and independence of spirit is there! There is nothing more imaginative and awful than the passage,

"—— Arcades ipsum
Credunt se vidisse Jovem," &c.[1]

'In describing the weight of sorrow and fear on Dido's mind, Virgil shows great knowledge of human nature, especially in that exquisite touch of feeling,[2]

"Hoc visum nulli, *non ipsi effata sorori*."

The ministry of Confession is provided to satisfy the natural desire for some relief from the load of grief. Here, as in so many other respects, the Church of Rome adapts herself with consummate skill to our nature, and is strong by our weaknesses. Almost all her errors and corruptions are abuses of what is good.

'I think Buchanan's "Maiæ Calendæ" equal in sentiment, if not in elegance, to anything in Horace; but your brother Charles, to whom I repeated it the other day, pointed out a false quantity in it.[3] Happily this had escaped me.'

'When I began to give myself up to the profession of a

[1] Æn. viii. 352. [2] Æn. iv. 455.

[3] If I remember right, it is in the third line,

'Ludisque dicatæ, jocisque;'

poet for life, I was impressed with a conviction, that there were four English poets whom I must have continually before me as examples—Chaucer, Shakspeare, Spenser, and Milton. These I must study, and equal *if I could*; and I need not think of the rest.'[1]

'I have been charged by some with disparaging Pope and Dryden. This is not so. I have committed much of both to memory. As far as Pope goes, he succeeds; but his Homer is not Homer, but Pope.'

'I cannot account for Shakspeare's low estimate of his own writings, except from the sublimity, the superhumanity, of his genius. They were infinitely below his conception of what they might have been, and ought to have been.'

'The mind often does not think, when it thinks that it is thinking. If we were to give our whole soul to anything, as the bee does to the flower, I conceive there would be little difficulty in any intellectual employment. Hence there is no excuse for obscurity in writing.'

'"Macbeth," is the best conducted of Shakspeare's plays. The fault of "Julius Cæsar," "Hamlet," and "Lear," is, that the interest is not, and by the nature of the case could not be, sustained to their conclusion. The death of Julius Cæsar is too *overwhelming* an incident for *any* stage of the drama but the *last*. It is an incident to which the mind clings, and from which it will not be torn away to share in other sorrows. The same may be said

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a strange blunder, for Buchanan must have read Horace's,

'Quid dedicatum poscit Apollinem,'

a hundred times.

[1] This paragraph was communicated by Mr. H. C. Robinson.

of the madness of Lear. Again, the opening of "Hamlet" is full of exhausting interest. There is more mind in "Hamlet" than any other play; more knowledge of human nature. The first act is incomparable. . . . There is too much of an every-day sick room in the death-bed scene of Catherine, in "Henry the Eighth"—too much of leeches and apothecaries' vials. . . . "Zanga" is a bad imitation of "Othello." Garrick never ventured on Othello: he could not submit to a black face. He rehearsed the part once. During the rehearsal Quin entered, and, having listened for some time with attention, exclaimed, "Well done, David! but where's the tea-kettle?" alluding to the print of Hogarth, where a black boy follows his mistress with a teakettle in his hand. . . . In stature Garrick was short. . . . A fact which conveys a high notion of his powers is, that he was able to *act out* the absurd stage-costume of those days. He represented Coriolanus in the attire of Cheapside. I remember hearing from Sir G. Beaumont, that while he was venting, as Lear, the violent paroxysms of his rage in the awful tempest scene, his wig happened to fall off. The accident did not produce the slightest effect on the gravity of the house, so strongly had he impregnated every breast with his own emotions.'

'Some of my friends (H. C. for instance) doubt whether poetry on contemporary persons and events can be good. But I instance Spenser's "Marriage," and Milton's "Lycidas." True, the "Persæ" is one of the worst of Æschylus's plays; at least, in my opinion.'

'Milton is falsely represented by some as a democrat. He was an aristocrat in the truest sense of the word. See the quotation from him in my "Convention of Cintra."[1]

[1] Page 191, at end, where Milton speaks of the evils suffered by

Indeed, he spoke in very proud and contemptuous terms of the populace. "Comus" is rich in beautiful and sweet flowers, and in exuberant leaves of genius; but the ripe and mellow fruit is in "Samson Agonistes." When he wrote that, his mind was Hebraized. Indeed, his genius fed on the writings of the Hebrew prophets. This arose, in some degree, from the temper of the times; the Puritan lived in the Old Testament, almost to the exclusion of the New.'

'The works of the old English dramatists are the gardens of our language.'

'One of the noblest things in Milton is the description of that sweet, quiet morning in the "Paradise Regained," after that terrible night of howling wind and storm. The contrast is divine.'[1]

'What a virulent democrat ——— is! A man ill at ease with his own conscience, is sure to quarrel with all government, order, and law.'

'The influence of Locke's Essay, was not due to its own merits, which are considerable; but to external circumstances. It came forth at a happy opportunity, and coincided with the prevalent opinions of the time. The Jesuit doctrines concerning the papal power in deposing kings, and absolving subjects from their allegiance, had driven some Protestant theologians to take refuge in the theory of the divine right of kings. This theory was unpalatable to the world at large, and others invented the more popular doctrine of a social contract, in its place; a doctrine which history refutes. But Locke did what he could to accommodate this principle to his own system.'

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a nation, 'unless men more than vulgar, bred up in the knowledge of ancient and illustrious deeds, conduct its affairs.'

[1] Paradise Regained, iv. 431.

'The only basis on which property can rest, is right derived from prescription.'

'The best of Locke's works, as it seems to me, is that in which he attempts the least—his "Conduct of the Understanding."'

In the summer of 1827, speaking of some of his contemporaries, Mr. Wordsworth said, 'T. Moore has great natural genius; but he is too lavish of brilliant ornament. His poems smell of the perfumer's and milliner's shops. He is not content with a ring and a bracelet, but he must have rings in the ears, rings on the nose—rings everywhere.

'Walter Scott is not a careful composer. He allows himself many liberties, which betray a want of respect for his reader. For instance, he is too fond of inversions; *i. e.*, he often places the verb before the substantive, and the accusative before the verb. W. Scott quoted, as from me,

> "The swan on *sweet* St. Mary's lake
> Floats double, swan and shadow,"

instead of *still;* thus obscuring my idea, and betraying his own uncritical principles of composition.

'Byron seems to me deficient in *feeling*. Professor Wilson, I think, used to say that "Beppo" was his best poem; because all his faults were there brought to a height. I never read the "English Bards" through. His critical prognostications have, for the most part, proved erroneous.'

'Sir James Mackintosh said of me to M. de Staël, "Wordsworth is not a great poet, but he is the greatest man among poets." Madame de Staël complained of my style.

'Now whatever may be the result of my experiment in the subjects which I have chosen for poetical composition — be they vulgar or be they not,—I can say without vanity, that I have bestowed great pains on my *style*, full as much as any of my contemporaries have done on theirs. I yield to none in *love for my art*. I, therefore, labour at it with reverence, affection and industry.* My main endeavour, as to style, has been that my poems should be written in pure intelligible English. Lord Byron has spoken severely of my compositions. However faulty they may be, I do not think that I ever could have prevailed upon myself to print such lines as he has done; for instance,

> "I stood at Venice on the Bridge of Sighs,
> A palace and a prison on each hand."

Some person ought to write a critical review, analyzing Lord Byron's language, in order to guard others against imitating him in these respects.

'Shelley is one of the best *artists* of us all: I mean in workmanship of style.'

'At Calgarth, dining with Mrs. and the Miss Watsons . . . a very fine portrait of the late Bishop in the dining room. . . . Mr. Wordsworth there: a very agreeable party. Walked home with him in the evening to Rydal. It rained

* [Another remarkable trait in Wordsworth's character as an author, was, that with that self-possession, which belongs to genius of a high order, he united a spirit of willing deference to thoughtful and genial criticism on his poems. Of this, ample illustration might be given from his revisions of the text. The readiness with which he listened to suggested emendations, was indeed a part of the sedulous and dutiful culture which he devoted to his Art. — H. R.]

all the way. We met a poor woman in the road. She sobbed as she passed us. Mr. Wordsworth was much affected with her condition: she was swollen with dropsy, and slowly hobbling along with a stick, having been driven from one lodging to another. It was a dark stormy night. Mr. Wordsworth brought her back to the Low-wood Inn, where, by the landlord's leave, she was housed in one of his barns.'

'One day I met Mr. M. T. Sadler, at the late Archbishop's. Sadler did not know me; and before dinner he began to launch forth in a critical dissertation on contemporary English Poetry. "Among living poets, your Grace may know there is one called Wordsworth, whose writings the world calls childish and puerile, but I think some of them wonderfully pathetic." "Now Mr. Sadler," said the Archbishop, "what a scrape you are in! here is Mr. Wordsworth: but go down with him to dinner, and you will find that, though a great poet, he does not belong to the 'genus irritabile.'" This was very happy.'

'After returning one day from church at Addington, I took the liberty of saying a few words on the sermon we had heard. It was a very homely performance. "I am rather surprised, my Lord Archbishop, that when your Grace can have the choice of so many preachers in England, you do not provide better for yourself." "Oh!" said he, "I think I can bear bad preaching better than most people, and I therefore keep it to myself." This seemed to me a very pleasing trait in the gentle and loveable character of that admirable man.'

'Patriarchal usages have not quite deserted us of these valleys. This morning (new year's day) you were awakened early by the minstrels playing under the eaves, "Honour to Mr. Wordsworth!" "Honour to Mrs. Words-

worth!" and so to each member of the household by name, servants included, each at his own window. These customs bind us together as a family, and are as beneficial as they are delightful. May they never disappear!'

'In my Ode on the "Intimations of Immortality in Childhood," I do not profess to give a literal representation of the state of the affections, and of the moral being in childhood. I record my own feelings at that time—my absolute spirituality, my "all-soulness," if I may so speak. At that time I could not believe that I should lie down quietly in the grave, and that my body would moulder into dust.

'Many of my poems have been influenced by my own circumstances, when I was writing them. "The Warning" was composed on horseback, while I was riding from Moresby in a snow-storm. Hence the simile in that poem,

> "While thoughts press on and feelings overflow,
> And quick words round him fall like *flakes* of *snow*."

'In the "Ecclesiastical Sonnets"[1] the lines concerning the Monk,

> "Within his cell,
> Round the decaying trunk of human pride,
> At morn, and eve, and midnight's silent hour,
> Do penitential cogitations cling:
> Like ivy round some ancient elm they twine
> In grisly folds and strictures serpentine;
> Yet while they strangle, a fair growth they bring
> For recompence — their own perennial bower;" —

were suggested to me by a beautiful tree clad as thus described, which you may remember in Lady Fleming's park at Rydal, near the path to the upper waterfall.'

[1] Sonnet xxi.

'S——, in the work you mentioned to me, confounds *imagery* and *imagination*. Sensible objects really existing, and felt to exist, are *imagery*; and they may form the materials of a descriptive poem, where objects are delineated as they are. Imagination is a subjective term; it deals with objects not as they are, but as they appear to the mind of the poet.

'The imagination is that intellectual lens through the medium of which the poetical observer sees the objects of his observation, modified both in form and colour; or it is that inventive dresser of dramatic *tableaux*, by which the persons of the play are invested with new drapery, or placed in new attitudes; or it is that chemical faculty by which elements of the most different nature and distant origin are blended together into one harmonious and homogeneous whole.

'A beautiful instance of the modifying and *investive* power of imagination may be seen in that noble passage of Dyer's "Ruins of Rome,"[1] where the poet hears the voice of Time; and in Thomson's description of the streets of Cairo, expecting the arrival of the caravan which had perished in the storm.[2]

'Read all Cowley; he is very valuable to a collector of English sound sense. . . . Burns's "Scots wha ha" is poor as a lyric composition.

[1] l. 37:

'The pilgrim oft,
At dead of night, 'mid his oraison hears
Aghast the voice of TIME, disparting towers,' &c.

[2] Thomson's Summer, 980:

'In Cairo's crowded streets,
The impatient merchant, wondering, waits in vain,
And Mecca saddens at the long delay.'

'Ariosto and Tasso are very absurdly depressed in order to elevate Dante. Ariosto is not always sincere; Spenser always so.'

'I have tried to read Goëthe. I never could succeed. Mr. —— refers me to his "Iphigenia," but I there recognise none of the dignified simplicity, none of the health and vigour which the heroes and heroines of antiquity possess in the writings of Homer. The lines of Lucretius describing the immolation of Iphigenia are worth the whole of Goëthe's long poem. Again, there is a profligacy, an inhuman sensuality, in his works which is utterly revolting. I am not intimately acquainted with them generally. But I take up my ground on the first canto of "Wilhelm Meister;" and, as the attorney-general of human nature, I there indict him for wantonly outraging the sympathies of humanity. Theologians tell us of the degraded nature of man; and they tell us what is true. Yet man is essentially a moral agent, and there is that immortal and unextinguishable yearning for something pure and spiritual which will plead against these poetical sensualists as long as man remains what he is.'*

'Scientific men are often too fond of aiming to be men of the world. They crave too much for titles, and stars, and ribbons. If Bacon had dwelt only in the court of Nature, and cared less for that of James the First, he would have been a greater man, and a happier one too.'

'I heard lately from young Mr. Watt, a noble instance of magnanimity in an eminent French chemist. He had

* [Mrs. Hemans, in a letter written after her visit at Rydal Mount, mentions that Wordsworth said to her — 'Goëthe's writings cannot live, because *they are not holy*.' — 'I found,' she adds, 'that he had unfortunately adopted this opinion from an attempt to read Wilhelm Meister, which had inspired him with irrepressible disgust.' 'Memorials of Mrs. Hemans,' Chap. XII. — H. R.]

made a discovery, which he was informed would, if he took out a patent, realize a large fortune. "No," said he, "I do not live to amass money, but to discover truth; and as long as she attends me in my investigations so long will I serve her and her only."'

'Sir —— I know from my own experience was ruined by prosperity. The age of Leo X. would have shone with greater brilliance if it had had more clouds to struggle with. The age of Louis XIV. was formed by the Port Royal amid the storms and thunders of the League. Racine lived in a court till it became necessary to his existence, as his miserable death proved. Those petty courts of Germany have been injurious to its literature. They who move in them are too prone to imagine themselves to be the whole world, and compared with the whole world they are nothing more than these little specks in the texture of this hearth-rug.'

'As I was riding Dora's pony from Rydal to Cambridge, I got off, as I occasionally did, to walk. I fell in with a sweet looking peasant girl of nine or ten years old. She had been to carry her father's dinner who was working in the fields, and she was wheeling a little wheelbarrow in which she collected manure from the roads for her garden at home. After some talk I gave her a penny, for which she thanked me in the sweetest way imaginable. I wish I had asked her whether she could read, and whether she went to school. But I could not help being struck with the happy arrangement which Nature has made for the education of the heart, an arrangement which it seems the object of the present age to counteract instead of to cherish and confirm. I imagined the happy delight of the father in seeing his child at a distance, and watching her as she approached to perform her errand of love. I

imagined the joy of the mother in seeing her return. I am strongly of opinion (an opinion, you, perhaps, have seen expressed by me in a letter to Mr. Rose)[1] that this is the discipline which is more calculated by a thousand degrees to make a virtuous and happy nation than the all-engrossing, estranging, eleemosynary institutions for education, which perhaps communicate more *knowledge*. In these institutions what the pupils gain in *knowledge* they often lose in *wisdom*. This is a distinction which must never be lost sight of.

'Education should never be wholly eleemosynary. But must the parent suffer privations for the sake of the child? Yes; for these privations endear the child to the parent, and the parent to the child; and whatever education the parent may thus gain or lose for his child, he has thus gained the noblest result of the most liberal education for himself — the habit of self-denial.'

'Next to your principles, and affections, and health, value your time.'

I have been favoured, by one of Mr. Wordsworth's friends,[2] with the following reminiscences:

'I remember Mr. Wordsworth saying that, at a particular stage of his mental progress, he used to be frequently so rapt into an unreal transcendental world of ideas that the external world seemed no longer to exist in relation to him, and he had to reconvince himself of its existence *by clasping a tree*, or something that happened to be near him. I could not help connecting this fact with that obscure passage in his great Ode on the "Intimations of Immortality," in which he speaks of

[1] See above, Chapter XLV.

[2] The Rev. R. P. Graves, of Windermere.

" Those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things;
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a creature,
Moving about in worlds not realized," &c.

'I heard him once make the remark that it would be a good habit to watch closely the first involuntary thoughts upon waking in the morning, as indications of the real current of the moral being.

'I was struck by what seemed to me a beautiful analogy, which I once heard him draw, and which was new to me—that the individual characters of mankind showed themselves distinctively in childhood and youth, as those of trees in spring; that of both, of trees in summer and of human kind in middle life, they were then alike to a great degree merged in a dull uniformity; and that again, in autumn and in declining age, there appeared afresh all their original and inherent variety brought out into view with deeper marking of character, with more vivid contrast, and with great accession of interest and beauty.

'He thought the charm of Robinson Crusoe mistakenly ascribed, as it commonly is done, to its *naturalness.* Attaching a full value to the singular yet easily imagined and most picturesque circumstances of the adventurer's position, to the admirable painting of the scenes, and to the knowledge displayed of the working of human feelings, he yet felt sure that the intense interest created by the story arose chiefly from the extraordinary energy and resource of the hero under his difficult circumstances, from their being so far beyond what it was natural to expect, or what would have been exhibited by the average of men; and that similarly the high pleasure derived from his suc-

cesses and good fortunes arose from the peculiar source of these uncommon merits of his character.

'I have heard him pronounce that the Tragedy of Othello, Plato's records of the last scenes of the career of Socrates, and Isaac Walton's Life of George Herbert, were in his opinion the most pathetic of human compositions.

'In a walk one day, after stopping, according to his custom, to claim admiration for some happy aspect of the landscape, or beautiful *composition* on a smaller scale of natural objects, caught by him at the precisely best point of view in the midst of his conversation on other subjects, he added, good humouredly, that there were three callings for success in which Nature had furnished him with qualifications — the callings of poet, landscape-gardener, and critic of pictures and works of art. On hearing this I could not but remember how his qualifications for the second were proved by the surprising variety of natural beauties he managed to display to their best advantage, from the very circumscribed limits of the garden at Rydal Mount, "an invisible hand of art everywhere working" (to use his own exquisite expression) "in the very spirit of nature," and how many there were who have owed the charm of their grounds and gardens to direction sought from his well known taste and feeling. As to works of art, his criticism was not that of one versed in the history of the schools, but, always proceeding upon first principles, the "prima philosophia," as he called it; and it was, as it appeared to me, of the highest order.

'He was a very great admirer of *Virgil*, not so much as a creative poet, but as the most consummate master of language, that, perhaps, ever existed. From him, and Horace, who was an especial favourite, and Lucretius, he used to quote much.'

The following extracts are from a letter by an American gentleman to one of his fellow-countrymen, whose name has been frequently mentioned in these pages, Henry Reed, Esq. The writer is describing a visit to Mr. Wordsworth, at Rydal, on August 18, 1849. Mr. Wordsworth was then in his 80th year.[1]

[1] A visit at Rydal, about this time, suggested the following lines, with which I have been favoured by the author.

LINES WRITTEN AFTER A VISIT TO WORDSWORTH BY ROBERT MONTGOMERY.

A thought the Universe in worth outweighs
Viewed as dead matter, meaningless, and dumb:
Hence, on some form where intellect is shrined
And genius dwells, in purity of power
To God and wisdom dedicate, we gaze
With no cold glance, by common love inspired.
And thus, on him, that venerable bard!
The laurelled priest of poetry and truth,
August with years, by mournful calm subdued,*
With filial reverence my spirit looked
When first I heard him, in his mountain-home,
My entrance welcome. Boyhod's pensive dawn
Ideal magic from his mental springs
So oft had drunk, that when their breathing source
Before me stood embodied, all the spells
His numbers wielded seemed in one combined,
And round my soul in high remembrance drawn,
Till, like a seer, or hierarch of mind
And melody, immortal Wordsworth thrilled
My heart, and made it vibrate into tears, —
For, tones there are in his creative verse
By childhood not unechoed: but, when age
Deepens the character, and powers awake

* An allusion to the Poet's bereavement in the death of his beloved daughter.

To Professor Henry Reed.

'*Philadelphia, Sept.* 1850.

'My dear Friend,

'You have asked me to write out as fully as I can an account of my visit to Wordsworth last summer, of which

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To more majestic strains attuned, his thoughts
The hidden lyre of consciousness within
Electrically move, and secret chords
By him are touched, which prove the soul divine.

When thus indebted to his wealth of mind,
How could I gaze on that capacious brow
Open and high, and like an arch of thought
O'er eyes of intellectual blandness curved,
Or scan the lines, or view those silvered locks
Which o'er his countenance a hoary grace
Suffused, and not ennobling homage pay?
What, shall mere nature's majesty of forms
The eye entrance, where admiration glows
Because, though mute, those forms to fancy hint
A soul in matter, and a speech in things, —
And earth's own Laureates be unreverenced
By mind? The human race their debtor is;
Sea, air, and mountain, lake, and lonely shore,
Forests and woods, and fields where freshness blooms,
All are immortalized by some radiance cast
From their high meanings, who the world transform,
And cast a beauty round the common lot,
By making loveliness more lovely still.
A mental prophet and a priest of song
The bard of Rydal is to souls that see
How heaven-born genius, like a mouth for God,
Opens some new Apocalypse of power
Which faith reveres, and meditation loves:
For have not Nature, Providence, and Man
Of both the centre, from his thoughtful muse

your letter of introduction was the occasion. Feeling very grateful to you for the pleasure which that visit gave me,

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A sympathy of mild and mournful tone
Partaken, till Association's laws
Have each invested with a beauteous charm?
Thus, mountain grandeur, and the grace of hills,
Like thine, Helvellyn! with their hollow sweep,
Or forked Skiddaw with his famous brow,
Parnassian groves, and glades of blissful calm
Where trees their twilight cast, — to him were dear,
And with his being half incorporate grew;
The thorn had meanings, and a thistle spoke
Its own stern language, while each meadow-flower
A gem of beauty on Creation's brow
In blooming radiance seemed by angels dropt:
Nature to *him* was one Almighty speech
Significant, and deep, and full of God.
Nothing was lost, but all to love appealed:
The linnet's chant, a homeless cuckoo's song,
An eagle's majesty, or insect's mirth,
To him were welcome, and some feeling touched.
All voices, visions, all of sense and sound,
Home to his heart a deep impression sent
Which gave him partnership in Nature's ALL, —
As though 't were conscious. Hence, the landscapes were
An outward token of the inward mind,
Lived in his life, and from the spirit's lyre
Drew melodies of thought, that shall not die
While throbs the heart with poetry or prayer.

Not mere description, pensive, deep, or grand,
His verse unfolds; but he the mind has taught
How Nature's sacraments and symbols speak
To moral reverence with a language mute
But mighty, — how her words and motions are
Responsively to man's more hidden world
With such accordance shaped, that heavenward minds
View God and angels, where the creedless sense

and desiring to make a more minute record of it than either the letter I addressed to you from Keswick, or my

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Is charmed by nothing but material show.
And human life, as providental love
To man revealed by Omnipresent acts
Of watching tenderness, from Heaven at work, —
His numbers paint with philosophic grace,
And wisdom most benign. To him the scene
Of blent existence was divinely touched
With sacredness and awe, whence prayer and praise
Were due, and godless pride should learn to think,
And none seemed orphaned from the Father-God.
For, as in Nature, nothing is by Heaven
Forgotten, from the vaster forms of life
And being, down to each minutest speck,
But in the beam of God's parental eye
Remains for ever, — so, that social world,
Where MIND and WILL their awfulness unfold
And Character is moulded, to his gaze
An ordered scene of theocratic law
Presented, where enthroned, the Godhead reigned,
And *all* were precious, who His cause maintain, —
Possible angels, whom the SON redeemed.

All Nature thus made spiritually deep
By her significance of conscious life,
To man responsive, and the moral world
Where Providence to human will conjoins
Each plan and purpose, being hence enlinked
With glories uncreate, — no wonder MAN
A true Shekinah of transcendent powers
To Wordsworth seemed, — a soul of priceless cost,
Whose incarnation, in its meanest guise,
Involves more grandeur than 'the worlds' contain.
Earth, space, and time, and all which tinselled pride
Amid the pageantries of wealth pursues,
Or mere Convention by her creed exacts,
Before it vanished! — *Individual mind* *

* See The Excursion, *passim*.

journal written at the time contains, I gladly comply with your request.

'It was about noon on the 18th of August, 1849, that I set out with my friends, from their house near Bowness, to ride to Ambleside. Our route was along the shore of Lake Windermere. It was my first day among the English lakes, and I enjoyed keenly the loveliness which was spread out before me. My friends congratulated me on the clearness of the atmosphere and the bright skies. Twilight is all-important in bringing out the full beauty of the Lake Region, and in this respect I was very fortunate. I had already been deeply moved by the tranquil beauty of Windermere, for, as I came out of the cottage, formerly Professor Wilson's, where I had passed the night, there it lay in all its grandeur, its clear waters, its green islands, and its girdle of solemn mountains. It was quite dark when I had been conducted to this cottage the night before, so that I saw the lake for the first time in the light of early morning. The first impression was confirmed by every new prospect as we rode along. The vale seemed a very paradise for its sweet seclusion. I had been told that after Switzerland, I should find little to attract me in this region, but such was not the case. Nothing can be more lovely than these lakes and mountains, the latter thickly wooded, and rising directly from the water's edge. The foliage is of the darkest green, giving to the lake in

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To him became the summit of his song.
And, how he trembled into wordless prayer
And grew religious, when unfathomed depths
Of man's capacity for bliss, or woe,
Were opened, and on Faith's predictive eye
The soul's hereafter like a vision rose
Self-realized, for heaven, or hell, prepared!

R. MONTGOMERY.

which it is reflected the same sombre hue. It seemed the fittest dwelling-place for a Poet, amid all this quiet beauty.

'It was half-past one when we reached Ambleside, where I left Mr. and Mrs. B., and walked on alone to Rydal Mount. I was full of eager expectations as I thought how soon I should, perhaps, be in the presence of Wordsworth — that after long years of waiting, of distant reverential admiration and love, I was, as I hoped, to be favoured with a personal interview with the great poet-philosopher, to whom you and I, and so many, many others, feel that we are under the deepest obligation for the good which has come to us from his writings. At two o'clock I was at the wicket gate opening into Wordsworth's grounds. I walked along the gravel pathway, leading through shrubbery to the open space in front of the long two-story cottage, the Poet's dwelling. Your sketch of the house by Inman is a correct one,* but it gives no idea of the view *from* it, which is its chief charm. Rydal Mere with its islands, and the mountains beyond it, are all in sight. I had but a hasty enjoyment of this beauty; nor could I notice carefully the flowers which were blooming around. It was evident that the greatest attention had been paid to the grounds, for the flower-beds were tastefully arranged, and the gravel walks were in complete order. One might be well content, I thought, to make his abode at a spot like this.

'A boy of about twelve years was occupied at one of

* [Mr. Inman, during his visit at Rydal Mount, had made a pen-and-ink drawing of the Poet's dwelling, from which in the next year he painted a landscape: it was the dying artist's last work. After painting the two small figures in the foreground — one of the Poet, and the other of the Painter making his sketch — he retired (as he said to a friend) to his chamber to die. — H. R.]

the flower-beds, as I passed by ; he followed me to the door, and waited my commands. I asked if Mr. Wordsworth was in. . . . He was dining — would I walk into the drawing-room, and wait a short time ? . . . I was shown into the drawing-room, or study, I know not which to call it. . . . Here I am, I said to myself, in the great Poet's house. Here his daily life is spent. Here in this room, doubtless, much of his poetry has been written — words of power which are to go down with those of Shakspeare, and Spenser, and Milton, while our English tongue endures. It was a long apartment, the ceiling low, with two windows at one end, looking out on the lawn and shrubbery. Many engravings were on the walls. The famous Madonna of Raphael, known as that of the Dresden Gallery, hung directly over the fire-place. Inman's portrait of the Poet, your gift to Mrs. Wordsworth, being a copy of the one painted for you, had a conspicuous place. The portrait of Bishop White, also your gift (the engraving from Inman's picture) I also noticed.

. . . . . .

'I could have waited patiently for a long time, indulging the thoughts which the place called up. In a few minutes, however, I heard steps in the entry, the door was opened, and Wordsworth came in, it could be no other — a tall figure, a little bent with age, his hair thin and grey, and his face deeply wrinkled. . . . The expression of his countenance was sad, mournful I might say ; he seemed one on whom sorrow pressed heavily. He gave me his hand, and welcomed me cordially, though without smiling. "Will you walk out, Sir, and join us at the table?" said he. "I am engaged to dine elsewhere." "But you can sit with us," said he ; so, leading the way, he conducted me to the dining-room. At the head of the table sat Mrs.

Wordsworth; and their three grand-children made up the party. . . . It was a humble apartment, not ceiled, the rafters being visible; having a large old-fashioned chimney-place, with a high mantelpiece.

. . . . . .

'Wordsworth asked after Mr. Ticknor, of Boston, who had visited him a few months before, and for whom he expressed much regard. Some other questions led me to speak of the progress we were making in America, in the extension of our territory, the settlements on the Pacific, &c.; all this involving the rapid spread of our English tongue. Wordsworth at this looked up, and I noticed a fixing of his eye as if on some remote object. He said that considering this extension of our language, it behoved those who wrote to see to it, that what they put forth was on the side of virtue. This remark, although thrown out at the moment, was made in a serious, thoughtful way; and I was much impressed by it. I could not but reflect that to him a deep sense of responsibility had ever been present: to purify and elevate has been the purpose of all his writings. Such may have been at that moment his own inward meditation, and he may have had in mind the coming generations who are to dwell upon his words.

. . . . . .

'Queen Victoria was mentioned — her visit to Ireland which had just been made — the courage she had shown. "That is a virtue," said he, "which she has to a remarkable degree, which is very much to her credit."

. . . . . .

'Inman's portrait of him I alluded to as being very familiar to me, the copy which hung in the room calling it to mind, which led him to speak of the one painted by Pickersgill, for St. John's College, Cambridge. "I was a member of that College," he said, "and the fellows and

students did me the honour to ask me to sit, and allowed me to choose the artist. I wrote to Mr. Rogers on the subject, and he recommended Pickersgill, who came down soon afterwards, and the picture was painted here." He believed he had sat twenty-three times. My impression is he was in doubt whether Inman's or Pickersgill's portrait was the better one.

. . . . . .

'He spoke with great animation of the advantage of classical study, Greek especially. "Where," said he, "would one look for a greater orator than Demosthenes; or finer dramatic poetry, next to Shakspeare, than that of Æschylus and Sophocles, not to speak of Euripides?" Herodotus he thought "the most interesting and instructive book, next to the Bible, which had ever been written." Modern discoveries had only tended to confirm the general truth of his narrative. Thucydides he thought less of.

. . . . . .

'France was our next subject, and one which seemed very near his heart. He had been much in that country at the outbreak of the Revolution, and afterwards during its wildest excesses. At the time of the September massacres he was at Orleans. Addressing Mrs. W. he said, "I wonder how I came to stay there so long, and at a period so exciting." He had known many of the abbés and other ecclesiastics, and thought highly of them as a class; they were earnest, faithful men: being unmarried, he must say, they were the better able to fulfil their sacred duties; they were married to their flocks. In the towns there seemed, he admitted, very little religion; but in the country there had always been a great deal. "I should like to spend another month in France," he said, "before I close my eyes." He seemed to feel deep commiseration for the sorrows of that unhappy country. It

was evidently the remembrance of hopes which in his youth he had ardently cherished, and which had been blighted, on which his mind was dwelling. I alluded to Henry the Fifth, to whom many eyes were, I thought, beginning to turn. With him, he remarked, there would be a principle for which men could contend — legitimacy. The advantage of this he stated finely.

. . . . . .

'There was tenderness, I thought, in the tones of his voice, when speaking with his wife; and I could not but look with deep interest and admiration on the woman for whom this illustrious man had for so many years cherished feelings of reverential love.

"Peace settles where the intellect is meek,"

is a line which you will recall from one of the beautiful poems Wordsworth has addressed to her; and this seemed peculiarly the temper of her spirit — *peace*, the holy calmness of a heart to whom love had been "an unerring light." Surely we may pray, my friend, that in the brief season of separation which she has now to pass, she may be strengthened with divine consolation.

'I cannot forbear to quote here that beautiful passage, near the end of the great poem, "The Prelude," as an utterance by the author of tender feelings in his own matchless way. After speaking of his sister in tones of deepest thankfulness, he adds,

"Thefeafter came
One, whom with thee friendship had early paired;
She came, no more a phantom to adorn
A moment, but an inmate of the heart,
And yet a spirit, there for me enshrined,
To penetrate the lofty and the low;
Even as one essence of pervading light
Shines in the brightest of ten thousand stars,

And the meek worm that feeds her lonely lamp
Couched in the dewy grass."

'I have been led away from my narrative; but I wished to record the feelings which had arisen within me with regard to this excellent lady; she who has been, as —— has so happily expressed it in his letter to you, "almost like the Poet's guardian angel for near fifty years."

. . . . . .

'I may here mention, that throughout the conversation Wordsworth's manner was animated, and that he took pleasure in it evidently. His words were very choice; each sentence seemed faultless. No one could have listened to his talk for five minutes, even on ordinary topics, without perceiving that he was a remarkable man. Not that he was brilliant; but there was sustained vigour, and that mode of expression which denotes habitual thoughtfulness.

'When the clock struck four, I thought it time for me to go. Wordsworth told me to say to his friends in America, that he and his wife were well; that they had had a great grief of late, in the loss of their only daughter, which he supposed they would never get over.* This explained, as I have already mentioned, the sadness of

* [Another American gentleman, George S. Hillard, Esquire, of Boston, (who will, I trust, pardon this public use of a private letter without permission) writing to me in April, 1849, said respecting an interview which he had with Wordsworth, the summer before: 'His mind had not felt in the slightest degree the touch of time, and his health was good, his frame and countenance showing as few of the marks of age as those of any person, so old, that I have ever seen. * * I left him with my ideal image unstained and unruffled. His daughter's death has thrown a deep and abiding shadow over his path. In speaking of her he said that the loss of her "had taken the sunshine out of his life."'—H. R.]

his manner. Such strength of the affections in old age we rarely see. And yet the Poet has himself condemned, as you remember, in "The Excursion," long and persevering grief for objects of our love "removed from this unstable world," reminding one so sorrowing, of

> "that state
> Of pure, imperishable blessedness
> Which reason promises, and Holy Writ
> Ensures to all believers."

But, as if foreseeing his own case, he has added, with touching power,

> "And if there be whose tender frames have drooped
> Even to the dust, apparently through weight
> Of anguish unrelieved, and lack of power
> An agonizing sorrow to transmute;
> Deem not that proof is here of hope withheld
> When wanted most; a confidence impaired
> So pitiably, that having ceased to see
> With bodily eyes, they are borne down by love
> Of what is lost, and perish through regret."

'The weakness of his bodily frame it was which took away his power of tranquil endurance. Bowed down by the weight of years, he had not strength to sustain this further burden, grief for a much-loved child. His mind, happily, retained its clearness, though his body was decaying.

. . . . . .

'He walked out into the entry with me, and then asked me to go again into the dining-room, to look at an oak chest or cabinet he had there — a piece of old furniture curiously carved. It bore a Latin inscription, which stated that it was made 300 years ago, for William Wordsworth, who was the son of, &c. &c., giving the ancestors of said William for many generations, and ending "on whose

souls may God have mercy."[1] This Wordsworth repeated twice, and in an emphatic way, as he read the inscription. It seemed to me that he took comfort in the religious spirit of his ancestors, and that he was also adopting the solemn ejaculation for himself. There was something very impressive in his manner.

'I asked to see the cast from Chantrey's bust of him, which he at once showed me; also a crayon sketch by Haydon, which, I understood him to say, West had pronounced the finest crayon he had ever seen. He referred also to another sketch, by Margaret Gillies, I think, which was there.

'We then went out together on the lawn, and stood for awhile to enjoy the views, and he pulled open the shrubbery or hedge in places, that I might see to better advantage. He accompanied me to the gate, and then said if I had a few minutes longer to spare he would like to show me the waterfall which was close by — the lower fall of Rydal. I gladly assented, and he led the way across the grounds of Lady Fleming, which were opposite to his own, to a small summer-house. The moment we opened the door, the water-fall was before us; the summer-house being so placed as to occupy the exact spot from which it was to be seen; the rocks and shrubbery around closing it in on every side. The effect was magical. The view from the rustic house, the rocky basin into which the water fell, and the deep shade in which the whole was enveloped, made it a lovely scene. Wordsworth seemed to have much pleasure in exhibiting this beautiful retreat; it is described in one of his earlier poems, "The Evening Walk."[2]

[1] See above, Vol. I. p. 7.
[2] See above, Vol. I. p. 19.

As we returned together he walked very slowly, occasionally stopping when he said anything of importance; and again I noticed that looking into remote space of which I have already spoken. His eyes, though not glistening, had yet in them the fire which betokened the greatness of his genius. This no painter could represent, and this it was which gave to his countenance its high intellectual expression.*

. . . . . .

'Hartley Coleridge he spoke of with affection. . . . "There is a single line," he added, "in one of his father's poems which I consider explains the after-life of the son. He is speaking of his own confinement in London, and then says,

'But thou, my child, shalt wander like a breeze.'"

. . . . . .

'Of Southey he said that he had had the misfortune to outlive his faculties. His mind, he thought, had been

* [The physiognomical trait noticed above, (as after the receipt of the letter I mentioned to the writer,) has been observed also by professional study of the countenance: the Rev. R. A. Wilmott, in his 'Journal of Summer Time in the Country,' p. 44, states that one of the most accomplished of English portrait painters had remarked to him, that he had observed in every celebrated person, whose features he had copied, from the Duke of Wellington downwards, this looking of the eye, as it were, into infinity.

The following description is given by Leigh Hunt, in his 'Autobiography,' Chap. xv. vol. ii. p. 13.—'Walter Scott said that the eyes of Burns were the finest he ever saw. I cannot say the same of Mr. Wordsworth; that is, not in the sense of the beautiful, or even of the profound. But certainly I never beheld eyes that looked so inspired or supernatural. They were like fires half burning, half smouldering, with a sort of acrid fixture of regard, and seated at the further end of two caverns. One might imagine Ezekiel or Isaiah to have had such eyes.'—H. R.]

weakened by long watching by the sick bed of his wife, who had lingered for years in a very distressing state.

'The last subject he touched on was the international copyright question — the absence of protection in our country to the works of foreign authors. He said, mildly, that he thought it would be better *for us* if some acknowledgment, however small, was made. The fame of his own writings, as far as it was of pecuniary advantage to him, he had long regarded with indifference; happily, he had an income more than sufficient for all his wants. . . . . He remarked, he had once seen a volume of his poems published in an American newspaper.

'I happened to have in my pocket the small volume of *selections*, which you made some years ago. I produced it, and asked at the same time if he had ever seen it. He replied he had not. He took it with evident interest, turned to the title-page, which he read, with its motto. He began the preface then, in the same way. But here I must record a trifling incident, which may yet be worth noting. We were standing together in the road, Wordsworth reading aloud, as I have said, when a man accosted us, asking charity — a beggar of the better class. Wordsworth, scarcely looking off the book, thrust his hands into his pockets, as if instinctively acknowledging the man's right to beg by this prompt action. He seemed to find nothing, however; and he said, in a sort of soliloquy, "I have given to four or five, already, to-day," as if to account for his being then unprovided.

'Wordsworth, as he turned over one leaf after another, said, "But I shall weary you, sir." "By no means," said I; for I could have been content to stand there for hours to hear, as I did, the Poet read from time to time, with fitting emphasis, the choice passages which your preface and biographical sketch contain. Imagine with

what delight I listened to the venerable man, and to hear, too, from his own lips, such words as these, your own most true reflection: "*His has been a life devoted to the cultivation of the poet's art for its best and most lasting uses — a self-dedication as complete as the world has ever witnessed.*" Your remark with regard to his having outlived many of his contemporaries among the poets, he read with affecting simplicity; his manner being that of one who looked backward to the past with entire tranquillity, and forward with sure hope. I felt that his honoured life was drawing rapidly to a close, and with him there was evidently the same consciousness.

'He made but little comment on your notice of him. Occasionally he would say, as he came to a particular fact, "That's quite correct;" or, after reading a quotation from his own works, he would add, "That's from my writings." These quotations he read in a way that much impressed me; it seemed almost as if he was awed by the greatness of his own power, the gifts with which he had been endowed. It was a solemn time to me, this part of my interview; and to you, my friend, it would have been a crowning happiness to stand, as I did, by his side on that bright summer day, and thus listen to his voice. I thought of his long life; that he was one who had felt himself from early youth "a renovated spirit singled out for holy services" — one who had listened to the teachings of Nature, and communed with his own heart in the seclusion of those beautiful vales, until his thoughts were ready to be uttered for the good of his fellow-men. And there had come back to him offerings of love, and gratitude, and reverent admiration, from a greater multitude than had ever before paid their homage to a living writer; and these acknowledgments have been for benefits so deep and lasting, that words seem but a poor return. But I will not

attempt to describe further the feelings which were strongly present to me at that moment, when I seemed most to realize in whose presence I stood.

. . . . . .

'He walked with me as far as the main road to Ambleside. As we passed the little chapel built by Lady Fleming, which has been the occasion, as you remember, of one of his poems, there were persons, tourists evidently, talking with the sexton at the door. Their inquiries, I fancied, were about Wordsworth, perhaps as to the hour of service the next day, (Sunday,) with the hope of seeing him there. One of them caught sight of the venerable man at the moment, and at once seemed to perceive who it was, for she motioned to the others to look, and they watched him with earnest gaze. I was struck with their looks of delighted admiration. He stopped when we reached the main road, saying that his strength would not allow him to walk further. Giving me his hand, he desired again to be remembered to you and others in America, and wished me a safe return to my friends, and so we parted. I went on my way, happy in the recollection of this, to me, memorable interview. My mind was in a tumult of excitement, for I felt that I had been in the familiar presence of one of the noblest of our race; and this sense of Wordsworth's intellectual greatness had been with me during the whole interview. I may speak, too, of the strong perception of his moral elevation which I had at the same time. No word of unkindness had fallen from him. He seemed to be living as if in the presence of God, by habitual recollection. A strange feeling, almost of awe, had impressed me while I was thus with him.

'Believing that his memory will be had in honour in all coming time, I could not but be thankful that I had been admitted to intimate intercourse with him then, when he

was so near the end of life. To you, my dear friend, I must again say I owe this happiness, and to you it has been denied. You also, of all others of our countrymen, would have most valued such an interview, for to you the great Poet's heart has been in an especial manner opened in private correspondence. No other American has he honoured in the same degree; and by no one else in this country has the knowledge and appreciation of his poetry been so much extended. The love which has so long animated you has been such, that multitudes have been influenced to seek for joy and refreshment from the same pure source.

'I have been led, as I said at the beginning of my letter, to make this record, partly from your suggestion, and partly from a remark of Southey which I have lately seen, to the effect that Wordsworth was one of whom posterity would desire to know all that can be remembered. You will not, I trust, deem the incidents I have set down trivial; or consider any detail too minute, the object of which was only to bring the living man before you. Now that he has gone for ever from our sight in this world, I am led to look back to the interview with a deeper satisfaction; and it may be that this full account of it will have value hereafter. To you it was due that I should make the record; by myself these remembrances will ever be cherished among my choicest possessions.

'Believe me, my dear friend,

'Yours faithfully,

'ELLIS YARNALL.'

Mr. Wordsworth's character, as was said at the commencement of this Memoir, is best studied in his Works. They are his Life. The design of the present volumes, which are now drawing to a close, has been to illustrate

those works by personal and local information; and this task having been performed, there remains little more to be done than that a few observations should be added of a general kind, and the narrative then be concluded.

The daily life of the Poet at Rydal was of an uniform and regular kind. In 1847, the period of my last visit, the course was as follows:—The hour at which the family assembled in the morning was eight. The day began with prayers, as it ended. The form of prayer used was that compiled from the English and American liturgies, by Dr. Hook. An intercessory prayer was used for Miss Wordsworth, who was disabled by sickness from being present. After breakfast the lessons of the day (morning and evening) were read, and also the Psalms. Dinner was at two. The final meal was at seven or eight.

The intervals between these meals were filled by walking, writing, reading, and conversation.

It would be superfluous to say to any who are acquainted with Mr. Wordsworth's poems that his dominant feeling was love. What he gave to others, and what he most desired for himself, was love. 'Give me your love, I crave no other fee.' This feeling was indeed inexpressibly tender toward those of his own family and friends. It took possession of his soul, so as to be almost overpowering.

His kindness to his servants was very remarkable. The last time he was in Westminster Abbey was when he visited it to show it to one of them who had accompanied him in his journey from Rydal. In a letter he thus speaks of one of his female servants who had been very ill and died.

'Our anxieties are over, and our sorrow is not without heartfelt, I may say, heavenly, consolation. Dear, and good, and faithful, and dutiful Jane breathed her last about twelve o'clock last night. The doctor had seen her at

noon; he found her much weaker. She said to him, "I cannot stand now," but he gave us no reason to believe her end was so very near. You shall hear all particulars when we are permitted to meet, which God grant may be soon. Nothing could be more gentle than her departure.

'Yesterday, Mary read to her in my presence some chapters from the New Testament, and her faculties were as clear as any one's in perfect health, and so they have ever been to the last.'

It hardly need be added, that with so much love for others in lower stations he was of a humble spirit.

This was particularly the case in latter life. His trials — especially the great trial of all — were rich in good fruits. The loss of his beloved daughter, and, before her loss, the apprehension of it, and the unselfishness, unworldliness, and heavenly-mindedness of her disposition, especially in her sufferings, confirmed his own persuasion of the vanity of human intellect, regarded simply as such, and of all its powers and achievements, irrespective of a higher and better world.

> 'Heaven out of view, our wishes what are they?
> Our fond regrets, tenacious in their grasp?
> The sage's theory? the poet's lay? —
> Mere fibulæ without a robe to clasp,
> Obsolete lamps whose light no time recals,
> Urns without ashes, tearless lacrymals!' *

Writing to a friend, he says: 'I feel myself in so many respects unworthy of your love, and too likely to become more so.' (This was in 1844). 'Worldly-minded I am not; on the contrary, my wish to benefit those within my humble sphere, strengthens seemingly in exact proportion to my inability to realize those wishes. What I lament most is, that the spirituality of my nature does not expand

* [Vol. iii. p. 237.]

and rise the nearer I approach the grave, as yours does, and as it fares with my beloved partner. The pleasure which I derive from God's works in his visible creation is not with me, I think, impaired, but reading does not interest me as it used to do, and I feel that I am becoming daily a less instructive companion to others. Excuse this egotism. I feel it necessary to your understanding what I am, and how little you would gain by habitual intercourse with me, however greatly I might benefit from intercourse with you.'

The intimate friend to whom these lines were written bears strong testimony to his humility. Indeed, he could not have been what he was without it. As he said in a letter to a friend,[1] 'It is the habit of my mind inseparably to connect loftiness of imagination with that humility of mind which is best taught in Scripture.'

One of the consequences of this spirit of love and humility was, that, although he looked with apprehension and alarm at the destinies of England, yet he cherished a spirit of faith and hope for the ultimate and complete triumph of sound principles. Writing to a friend at a time of public excitement, he thus speaks: 'After all (as an excellent Bishop of the Scotch Church said to a friendly correspondent of mine), "Be of good heart; the affairs of the world will be conducted as heretofore, — by the foolishness of man and the wisdom of God."'

[1] Above, p. 257.

[Before passing to the concluding chapter, I would detain the reader for a little while upon an impressive passage in Wordsworth's life, which has been described in a work published since the completion of these 'Memoirs' — the 'Memoir of Hartley Coleridge, by his Brother,' the Rev. Derwent Coleridge. — The death of Hartley Coleridge took place on the 6th of January, 1849: it must be borne in mind that it was to him — the child

of his friend — that Wordsworth, forty-seven years before, addressed those remarkable lines entitled, 'To H. C., six years old,' in which an almost prophetic interest was afterwards disclosed. What occurred on the day after Hartley Coleridge's death is thus narrated by his brother:

'While I restrict myself to general terms in speaking of the many affectionate regrets which were occasioned by my brother's death, and which I doubt not this record of his life will awaken, a word must be set apart for the aged friend, who having watched with that insight, of which foresight is but the developed form, his hopeful, fearful childhood, had seen him as he lay a dying man, and now heard that he was no more. He was deeply affected. Perhaps he remembered that the fear which he had so beautifully expressed had proved more prophetic than the hope by which he had put it from him, — that "the morrow" had come to him, and many a morrow with a full freight of "injuries" — from which he had not been saved by an early, a sudden, or an easy death. He dropt some hint of these thoughts, but his words were few, and concluded by this touching request, or, I should say, direction: — "Let him lie by us — he would have wished it."

'The day following he walked over with me to Grasmere — to the churchyard, a plain enclosure of the olden time, surrounding the old village church, in which lay the remains of his wife's sister, his nephew, and his beloved daughter. Here, having desired the sexton to measure out the ground for his own and for Mrs. Wordsworth's grave, he bade him measure out the space of a third grave for my brother, immediately beyond.

'"When I lifted up my eyes from my daughter's grave," he exclaimed, "he was standing there!" pointing to the spot where my brother had stood on the sorrowful occasion to which he alluded. Then turning to the sexton he said, "Keep the ground for us, — we are old people, and it cannot be for long."

'In the grave thus marked out, my brother's remains were laid on the following Thursday, and in little more than a twelvemonth his venerable and venerated friend was brought to occupy his own. They lie in the south-east angle of the churchyard, not far from a group of trees, with the little beck, that feeds the lake with its clear waters, murmuring by their side. Around them are the quiet mountains.' 'Poems of Hartley Coleridge, with a Memoir of his Life by his Brother.' Vol. I. p. 184-186. — H. R.]

CHAPTER LXIV.

CONCLUSION.

On Sunday, the 10th of March, 1850, Mr. Wordsworth attended divine service at Rydal Chapel for the last time. Between four and five o'clock in the afternoon of that day he set out to walk to Grasmere, accompanied by Mr. Quillinan and Miss Hutchinson. The weather was ungenial, with a keen wind from the north-east; and Mr. Wordsworth was lightly clad, as usual. He walked over White Moss, and paid a visit to Mrs. Fisher, who had been in his service when he lived at Town-End. He then called at Mrs. Cookson's. Being there asked how Mrs. Wordsworth was, he replied, 'Pretty well: but indeed, she must be very unwell indeed for any one to discover it: she never complains.' He had been reading the third volume of Southey's Life and Correspondence, and conversed a good deal on that subject. His friends thought him looking feeble: he had a stick in his hand, on which he leaned when sitting in the house.

The next day Mr. Wordsworth, accompanied by Mrs. Wordsworth and his two nieces, called at Mr. Quillinan's house, to bid him good bye before his departure to pay a visit to a friend near Carlisle: he then walked on to Fox-how, to see Mrs. Arnold; and thence to Ambleside, where he called at Mrs. Nicholson's, and returned home to Rydal.

On the afternoon of the following day, Mr. Wordsworth went towards Grasmere, to meet his two nieces, who were coming from Town-End. He called at the cottage near the White Moss quarry, and, the occupant not being within, he sat down on the stone seat of the porch to watch the setting sun. It was a cold, bright evening. His friend and neighbour, Mr. Roughsedge, came to drink tea at Rydal; but Mr. Wordsworth, not being well, went early to bed.

On the 14th he complained of pain in his side; and the medical advice[1] of Mr. Fell and Mr. Green, of Ambleside, was resorted to. On the 20th the symptoms of the disorder assumed a more serious aspect. The throat and chest were affected, and the pleura were inflamed. In order to subdue the bronchial and pleuric inflammation, it had been thought requisite to resort to medical discipline, which had much reduced his strength, and left him in a state of exhaustion, debility, and lethargy, from which he was not able to rally. He seemed to feel much repugnance both for medicine and food. From this time the reports of his bodily condition fluctuated from day to day for more than a fortnight.

Sunday, 7th April.—Mr. Wordsworth completed his eightieth year to-day: he was prayed for in Rydal Chapel, morning and afternoon.

In a diary kept by a young lady, a near connection of Mr. Wordsworth, is the following entry, on Saturday, the 20th:

[1] Dr. Davy attended Mr. Wordsworth as a friend during part of his last illness. Dr. D. was not at Ambleside when Mr. Wordsworth was taken ill, and did not return thither till Saturday, April 6.

'At eleven this morning I went up to the Mount. William Wordsworth came in while I was in the dining-room, and asked me if I would go up stairs and see his father, who is becoming weaker every day. I met Mr. John Wordsworth, coming out of his father's room, very much affected. He had just been administering the Holy Communion to Mr. Wordsworth, who, when asked whether he would receive it, replied, "That is just what I want." When I stood by his bed-side (he does not get up now) and kissed him, he pressed my hand, but did not speak. R—— afterwards came into his room, and said to him, "Here is your god-daughter;" to which he faintly murmured, "God bless you!"'

On or about this day, Mrs. Wordsworth, with a view of letting him know what the opinion of his medical advisers was concerning his case, said gently to him, 'William, you are going to Dora.' He made no reply at the time, and the words seemed to have passed unheeded; indeed, it was not certain that they had been even heard. More than twenty-four hours afterwards one of his nieces came into the room, and was drawing aside the curtain of his chamber, and then, as if awakening from a quiet sleep, he said, 'Is that Dora?'

Tuesday, April 23*d.*—The report this morning was, 'Mr. Wordsworth is much the same.' . . . And so he remained till noon. . . . The entry in Mr. Quillinan's journal for this day is as follows: 'Mr. Wordsworth breathed his last calmly, passing away almost insensibly, exactly at twelve o'clock, while the cuckoo clock was striking the hour.'

Wordsworth died on the same day as that on which

Shakspeare was born, April 23d, being also the day of Shakspeare's death.

On Saturday, the 27th, his mortal remains, followed to the grave by his own family and a very large concourse of persons, of all ranks and ages, were laid in peace, near those of his children, in Grasmere churchyard. His own prophecy, in the lines,

> 'Sweet flower! belike one day to have
> A place upon thy Poet's grave,
> I welcome thee once more,' [1]

is now fulfilled. He desired no splendid tomb in a public mausoleum. He reposes, according to his own wish, beneath the green turf, among the dalesmen of Grasmere, under the sycamores and yews of a country churchyard, by the side of a beautiful stream, amid the mountains which he loved; and a solemn voice seems to breathe from his grave, which blends its tones in sweet and holy harmony with the accents of his poetry, speaking the language of humility and love, of adoration and faith, and preparing the soul, by a religious exercise of the kindly affections, and by a devout contemplation of natural beauty, for translation to a purer, and nobler, and more glorious state of existence, and for a fruition of heavenly felicity.

[1] Vol. ii. p. 129.

END OF VOLUME TWO.

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POSTSCRIPT.

While this edition has been in the press I have received from the Author a memorandum of a few typographical errors, which had occurred in the English edition: and the corrections have accordingly been made. The following, however, had been copied previously:

Vol. I. p. 112, l. 5, for 'moon' read 'sun.'
" " p. 294, l. 12, *dele* 'that.'
" " p. 328, l. 6, for '1803' read 1802'
" " p. 380, for 'January 1st,' read 'June 23.'

H. R.

June 13, 1851.